CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 22 January 2002, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr. Mohamed Tawfik (Egypt)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I declare open the 889th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament and the first part of its 2002 session.

Ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset I should like to say how proud Egypt is to assume the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at the beginning of this year's session and how proud I am to have been given this honour. It is a token of trust for which we are grateful and in which we take pride, particularly since it is the presidency in place at the beginning of the session which bears the major responsibility for trying to move the Conference's work forward.

I should also like to express my gratitude to Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference, and Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General, as well as the staff of the secretariat for the efficient and effective support they provide to the presidency in order to facilitate its task and the work of Conference generally. This will be very important for the success of this year's session.

I should like to begin the session by bidding farewell to those colleagues who have left the Conference since we adjourned in September, namely, Ambassador Carlos Amat Forés of Cuba, Ambassador Betancourt Ruales of Ecuador, Ambassador Ali Khorram of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi of Morocco, Ambassador Vasily Sidorov of the Russian Federation and Ambassador Mercedes Rico of Spain. I would be remiss if I did not also mention my own former Ambassador, Ms. Fayza Aboulnaga, who is now a government minister. I do hope that the delegations concerned will convey to them our deep appreciation of the valuable contribution which they made to our work during their tenure. We wish them every success and happiness in their new assignments.

I take this opportunity to extend a welcome to the new ambassadors who have been appointed to represent their Governments in the Conference, namely, Ambassador Luiz Felipe Seixas Corrêa of Brazil, Ambassador Volker Heinsberg of Germany, Ambassador Mohammad Reza Alborzi of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ambassador Omar Hilale of Morocco, Ambassador Leonid Skotnikov of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Carlos Miranda of Spain, Ambassador David Broucher of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Ambassador Eric Javits of the United States of America. I should like to take this opportunity to assure them of our full cooperation and support in their new assignments.

Ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen,

I should also like to assure you that the Egyptian presidency is fully committed to revitalizing the role of the Conference on Disarmament as the only forum for multilateral disarmament negotiations. Over the years, the Conference has successfully concluded some key international disarmament and non-proliferation instruments constituting the foundation of the

(The President)

international community's work in this domain. The work of multilateral disarmament is particularly important because it helps to establish internationally agreed rules which have the necessary legitimacy to ensure that they apply, without discrimination, to all States and peoples, effectively helping to strengthen international peace and stability.

The international scene has witnessed fundamental changes since the adjournment of the Conference's last session, following the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. As the whole world was gripped by a feeling of shock and revulsion at these barbarous acts, in a few short hours there emerged an unprecedented manifestation of international solidarity against terrorism, which served to highlight the importance of achieving security for all peoples, without exception. Indeed, this international solidarity underscores the willingness of the international community to work together, earnestly and efficiently, to achieve that goal. This offers new opportunities for the disarmament process, which may allow us to overcome the paralysis which has beset the Conference on Disarmament for many years and prevented us even from beginning our substantive work; although some do feel that recent developments in the international security situation may adversely affect the entire international arms control and disarmament apparatus, of which the Conference on Disarmament is a fundamental part. There is no historic inevitability about whether these predictions will come true. The international strategic situation is in the process of being built and it is perfectly possible for States and groups to reach an understanding on disarmament. We can also affirm that the existence of obstacles to the Conference's work and the fact that it has been unable to respond to the appeals of the General Assembly and the 2000 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference is not a definitive state of affairs, but one that can be remedied. We do have a real opportunity to revitalize the work of the Conference, so that it can assume its important responsibilities. This we can do.

In that regard, I should like to assure you that this presidency will do its utmost to reach agreement on a programme of work based on the efforts of previous Conference presidents, particularly the proposal put forward by Ambassador Amorim in document CD/1624. The proposal enjoyed the support of the Conference as a basis for further intensive consultations, by taking account of the opinions and proposals discussed last year in order to help us to reach agreement on a programme of work.

We are currently holding consultations on this subject and wish to hear all views, ideas and proposals as to ways of reconciling points of view, so that we can then embark on the substantive work of the Conference. All Member States in the Conference have a collective responsibility to agree on a programme of work and we hope that we will all demonstrate the utmost flexibility consistent with the legitimate security concerns of all States.

Ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen,

If the work of the Conference on Disarmament were to be paralysed for another year confidence in the Conference would be undermined and its legitimacy eroded, just when all peoples throughout the world are longing for effective disarmament measures, particularly for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, and nuclear weapons in particular, which

(The President)

threaten mankind with nuclear annihilation. All peoples of the world wish to live in peace and security. It is their fundamental right and we cannot accept a situation in which this security is monopolized by certain States with huge arsenals of weapons of mass destruction.

According to the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, the accumulation of weapons, particularly nuclear weapons, today constitutes much more of a threat than a protection for the future of humankind. If that was true in 1978, when the document was first adopted, it is equally true today, as we stand at the beginning of a new century, in which we hope that mankind will take effective steps to preserve peace and stability for all.

As we start a new session of the Conference on Disarmament today, it is time for us to send a clear message that the path of disarmament is a humanitarian path which serves the interests of us all and the aspirations of all peoples. I am quite certain that each and every one of us in this room will do everything in our power to shoulder our responsibilities.

In conclusion, I urge you all to look beyond fixed positions and to focus on innovative ideas. As we begin the new year we are greatly in need of new ideas to tackle the well-known problems which have prevented the Conference from beginning its substantive work. We need a new spirit that is suited to the challenges of our age and the faith which the international community has placed in this august forum. I should like us to begin this year's work in a spirit of confidence in our common aims and abilities.

Thank you for your attention.

I should now like to call upon the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, to read us a message addressed to the Conference by Mr. Kofi Annan. I give the floor to Mr. Román-Morey.

Mr. ROMÁN-MOREY (Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament): I will now proceed to read the message sent by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan. I quote:

> "The events of 11 September 2001 and their aftermath have brought home to the world the uncomfortable fact that disarmament and non-proliferation remain unfinished business, and that there is an acute need to strengthen existing measures, explore new ones for halting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and step up concerted efforts to eliminate these weapons from arsenals altogether. Even more directly, those events reminded us that effective measures are needed - and need to be swiftly implemented - to eliminate the risk of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists.
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> "In the aftermath of the September attacks, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously reaffirmed multilateralism as a core principle in negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation. The Assembly also emphasized the need for

(Mr. Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament)

progress in multilateral cooperation on disarmament and non-proliferation, to contribute to global efforts against terrorism. It is my sincere hope that this Conference will respond to these challenges with dynamism and determination.

"Such a response requires a complete break with the recent prolonged inactivity of the Conference. The past year yet again saw lack of progress in multilateral disarmament efforts. The abrupt end of negotiations on a protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention undermined the subsequent Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, which was therefore suspended without agreement on a final declaration. The announcement of the withdrawal of the United States from the ABM Treaty, regarded for years as a cornerstone of strategic stability, raised concerns over the risk of a new nuclear arms race, a loss of credibility in the commitment to nuclear disarmament, a weaponization of outer space, and a tendency towards unilateral approaches to international arms issues. And despite the strong reaffirmation of international support for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty at the 2001 Conference to facilitate its entry into force, the Treaty has yet to take effect five years after being opened for signature.

"In spite of this stagnation, there have been some positive developments in the international arena:

- The substantial reduction in nuclear weapons announced by the United States is indeed welcome progress - but reductions mutually agreed by the major nuclear-weapon Powers would give the rest of the international community greater confidence in the irreversibility of those cuts;

- The Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects adopted a programme of action, providing a blueprint for international and regional cooperation that may eventually lead to binding international norms; and

- The Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons expanded its scope of application to non-international armed conflicts and established mechanisms to address the issues of explosive remnants of war and mines other than anti-personnel mines.

"There were also some positive developments in your Conference itself. I welcome the movement in bridging the divergent views and interests of Member States on mechanisms to deal with two outstanding issues - nuclear disarmament, and prevention of an arms race in outer space - although there are still differences of opinion on the respective mandates. In this context, negotiations on banning the production of fissile material for weapon purposes are essential. I urge you to continue the consensus-building process with perseverance and determination.

(Mr. Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament)

"I hope that, as you embark on this new year, the events of 2001 will serve as a catalyst for the pursuit of new approaches to overcoming the stagnation in the Conference. I strongly believe that the representative membership of this Conference gives it the intellectual and political potential to overcome the current stalemate, and I trust you will use that potential to its fullest extent. I pledge the full cooperation of the United Nations in that endeavour, and wish you a productive session."

That is the end of the message, Mr. President. While I have the floor, I would like to make a few remarks on some organizational issues concerning the Conference on Disarmament.

As in previous years, the Conference has at its disposal 10 meetings per week. This means that, throughout its session, the Conference can hold two meetings daily, with full services. I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to you to make the best possible use of the resources allocated to the Conference. In particular, it is important that meetings start punctually and that they are not extended beyond the allocated time. Furthermore, I would like to emphasize that meetings with full services cannot be held in the evenings or during weekends.

As usual, the Conference will have at its disposal the Council Chamber, Room I, Room C-108 and the secretariat conference room on the sixth floor. If required, an additional conference room may also be provided upon request. When such facilities are needed for consultations or other meetings, delegations are kindly requested to make reservations in advance through the secretariat.

With regard to documentation, since the capacity of the language services is stretched to its limits, the measures already observed by the Conference concerning the most rational and economical issuance and the use of documentation need to be continued. In particular, all documents need to be presented well in advance and duplication of documentation should be avoided. In order to avoid the translation of the same document twice, delegations are kindly requested to inform the secretariat of any case of the submission of the same document for issuance both to the Conference on Disarmament and to the General Assembly. Furthermore, I would like to emphasize that the United Nations regulations do not permit the publication of statements delivered by delegations in plenary meetings as separate documents of the Conference, since they are always reproduced in the verbatim records and are, ipso facto, part of the official documentation of the Conference on Disarmament. I am sure that I can count on your full cooperation in exercising the necessary restraint, whenever possible, with regard to documentation.

I would also like to recall that, as part of the secretariat's efforts to reduce operating costs, only documents containing draft proposals which require action will be circulated in meeting rooms. Pre-session and reference documents will continue to be supplied to the Permanent Missions of Member States and of Observer States. Therefore, delegations are kindly requested to keep the copies they receive throughout the annual session and use them during the meetings. Nevertheless, a limited number of copies will be available from the documents distribution counter in room C-111, just opposite the Council Chamber.

(Mr. Román-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament)

Finally, I would like to remind delegations to send to the secretariat of the Conference their respective letters of accreditation as soon as possible, in order to expedite the issuance of passes granting access to the conference rooms, as well as the publication of the list of participants. For security reasons, delegations are kindly requested to carry with them their Conference on Disarmament passes or, at least, their identification provided by the United Nations Office at Geneva.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank Mr. Román-Morey for delivering the message addressed to us by Mr. Kofi Annan and for the information he has provided to us. I should like to ask Mr. Román-Morey to convey to the Secretary-General of the United Nations our appreciation for his contribution and the importance he attaches to our work.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has also sent me a communication transmitting all the resolutions on disarmament and international security matters adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, including those addressing specific requests to the Conference. The secretariat has distributed this in document CD/1660. Does any delegation wish to make a statement at this stage?

As that seems not to be the case, I invite the Conference to consider, in an informal plenary meeting, the draft agenda for the 2002 session as contained in document CD/WP.523, as well as the requests from States not members of the Conference on Disarmament to participate in our work during this session, as contained in document CD/WP.522. Both of these documents have been circulated by the secretariat. Thereafter, we shall resume the plenary meeting in order to formalize the agreements reached at the informal plenary.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

As I have just announced, I shall suspend the plenary meeting and the informal meeting to consider the draft agenda for the 2002 session and the requests received from non-member States to participate in our work will follow immediately. This meeting is restricted to the members of the Conference.

The meeting was suspended at 10.45 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): The 889th plenary meeting is now resumed.

In accordance with the agreement reached earlier, at the informal plenary meeting, may I take it that the Conference decides to adopt for its 2002 session the agenda contained in document CD/WP.523, which is before you.

Does anyone have any comments?

(The President)

In the absence of any comments, I will take it that the agenda is adopted.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): The agenda will be issued as an official document of the Conference by the secretariat.

In connection with the adoption of the agenda, I, as the President of the Conference, should like to state that it is my understanding that, if there is a consensus in the Conference to deal with any issues, they could be dealt with within this agenda.

I have been informed that the delegation of Pakistan has asked for the floor at this stage. Mr. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, at the outset of this annual session for 2002, the delegation of Pakistan would like to congratulate you and the brotherly country of Egypt on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We wish to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the spirit of the excellent relations which exist between our two fraternal countries.

Mr. President, your presence in the chair is a testimony of the absence of Her Excellency Ambassador and now Minister Fayza Aboulnaga, a dear colleague and friend who is sorely missed here in Geneva by many of her friends, but whose imprint on the work of this Conference and other international forums will continue to be felt. We ask you to convey to her our best wishes for success in the future.

Let me also take this opportunity to express farewell to so many of our dear colleagues who have left the Conference on Disarmament and Geneva and taken up other assignments. I would also like to welcome our new colleagues, the distinguished Ambassadors of Brazil, Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Morocco, the Russian Federation, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Mr. President, as stated in the message of the United Nations Secretary-General which has just been read to us, the global strategic scenario has been substantially transformed in the recent past. Yet our Conference is only able, owing to the constraints with which it is confronted, to adopt an agenda which is now several decades old. One of the new elements in this strategic scenario is the issue of missiles - missiles in all their aspects. In its resolution 56/24 B, in preambular paragraph 4, the United Nations General Assembly states that it is "convinced of the need for a comprehensive approach towards missiles, in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner, as a contribution to international peace and security". My delegation believes that this issue - the issue of missiles, including anti-missile systems - is one which requires careful consideration and possible negotiations for a regime capable of establishing international and regional stability and security in this regard.

(Mr. Akram Pakistan)

Second, the United Nations General Assembly has also adopted, year after year, two resolutions dealing with regional disarmament. At its last session, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 56/24 H, which, in paragraph 2, affirms that "global and regional approaches to disarmament complement each other and should therefore be pursued simultaneously to promote regional and international peace and security". Resolution 56/24 I is still more specific: in paragraph 2 the Assembly "requests the Conference on Disarmament to consider the formulation of principles that can serve as a framework for regional agreements on conventional arms control, and looks forward to a report of the Conference on this subject". My delegation believes that the Conference should respond to these recommendations and conclusions of the General Assembly.

Mr. President, in the light of your statement that any item not reflected on the agenda could be accommodated if there is a consensus in the work programme of this Conference, my delegation has gone along with the adoption of the agenda as it has been proposed. We would, however, reserve the right to raise these proposals for consideration in this Conference in the context of our discussions on the work programme.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the Ambassador of Pakistan for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I shall, of course, convey your compliments to the Minister, Ms. Fayza Aboulnaga.

Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I now call on the Ambassador of Turkey.

Mr. SUNGAR (Turkey): Mr. President, since this is the first time that my delegation has the privilege of speaking under your presidency, may I take this opportunity to extend our congratulations to you and assure you of the Turkish delegation's full support in the performance of your functions and in the pursuit of what we hope will be a productive and forward-looking session of the Conference on Disarmament.

Let me also use this occasion to welcome warmly distinguished colleagues from Brazil, Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. No doubt at this critical juncture we could use new vigour, creativity and energy to overcome the obstacles before us, which seem to be hardening by the year.

The 11 September terror attacks on the United States and the emergence of the bioterrorism during its aftermath have profoundly affected international political priorities, the global security agenda and the strategic landscape. These attacks have exposed our vulnerability as members of the international community. Whether we will be able to change the world for better or for worst will depend, however, on what lessons we are going to draw from these tragic experiences. From the point of view of the Conference on Disarmament the attacks demonstrated the relevance of disarmament and arms control. We are all duty-bound not to let any group, terrorist or otherwise, whatever their ideology or orientation, get their hands on any type of material which could be used as an ingredient of a weapon of mass destruction.

(Mr. Sungar, Turkey)

11 September and the ensuing developments have clearly demonstrated the urgent need for a concerted effort to eradicate weapons of mass destruction and to close any loopholes in the already existing disarmament regimes. We think that it is also high time for the Conference on Disarmament to live up to new challenges and meet the expectations of international public opinion.

The Conference on Disarmament is under keen scrutiny. We have to justify our existence. We can only do this by being productive. We cannot keep the engine running at idle and we cannot let the valuable intellectual and material resources so generously provided to us go to waste. In our deliberations we have to be mindful of possible strong criticism from the international community if, for another year, we fail to agree on a work programme as a result of inflexibility in our approach.

On a positive note, Mr. President, last year, we appointed three special coordinators, namely Ambassador Petko Draganov of Bulgaria on the expansion of the membership of the Conference, Ambassador Günther Seibert of Germany on the review of the agenda of the Conference and Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference. This delegation would like to commend the distinguished Ambassadors for their tireless efforts to break the stalemate. For this year we agreed that, while priority should be given to pursuing substantive work, new special coordinators on these issues would be reappointed as early as possible.

Conscious of our collective responsibility, my delegation is ready to start afresh on the work of the Conference on Disarmament and to tackle the obstacles that face us with a renewed sense of urgency.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank you, Ambassador, for your statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? If not, I should now like to invite the Conference to take a decision on the requests received from States not members of the Conference to participate in our work. These requests are contained in document CD/WP.522 and were received from the following States: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Gabon, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Holy See, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malta, Monaco, Oman, Portugal, Qatar, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sudan and Thailand.

May I take it that the Conference decides to invite these States to participate in our work in accordance with its rules of procedure?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): On the list of speakers for today I have Ambassador Leonid Skotnikov of the Russian Federation. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. SKOTNIKOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, as we commence the current annual session of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like first of all to congratulate you on your assumption of the important post of president and to assure you of the full support of the Russian delegation. I would also like to express our thanks for the words of welcome extended to me as a newcomer to the Conference and to convey my own greeting to all colleagues and to assure them of my full cooperation with them.

As we enter the new century, the vital need to build a world order based on equal security, common responsibility and cooperation among all States is becoming increasingly clear. Only thus, by combining the efforts of the entire international community, can we provide a response to the global challenges, threats and risks facing an increasingly interdependent, but - unfortunately - still highly vulnerable world. Much remains to be done to achieve this, including ridding ourselves once and for all of the decades-long heritage of nuclear standoff and global confrontation.

2001 was a testing time for the multi lateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime processes. Despite the intensive efforts that were made, any weighing of the losses and failures against the modest successes offer scant consolation. In the main this was because the collective approach was thwarted by unilateralism. Doubt was cast upon the effectiveness of multilateral efforts in an area where fundamental national security interests come together - and where they may be reconciled. As an example of this we may take the situation surrounding the ABM Treaty, an instrument which for decades really made it possible to restrain the arms race. Clouds have also gathered over the CTBT. We have seen people backing away from some of the decisions taken by the 2000 NPT Review Conference. The principle of the irreversibility of nuclear disarmament has been eroded. We have seen the torpedoing of many years of work on the Protocol to the BWC and the success of the CCW Review Conference at the end of the year could hardly be seen to improve the overall gloomy picture in the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation process.

The shock of 11 September 2001 helped us to realize the full horror of the threat posed by international terrorism to humankind. Long before those tragic events the Russian Federation had warned of the deadly danger harboured by the "Terrorist International" and had called for the establishment of a common anti-terrorist front: witness our immediate and full support for the anti-terrorist coalition, whose formation merely confirmed the lack of any alternative to multilateralism and the central role of the United Nations in resolving security issues in the twenty-first century.

The essence, the core of a multilateral approach to ensuring international security and to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament lies in the fact one's own security cannot be guaranteed at the expense of another's. This is the leitmotif which informs Russia's approach to our work here in the Conference on Disarmament, and it is precisely on these convictions that we have built and will continue to build our work here in the Conference. We hope that in 2002 this unique negotiating forum will prove equal to the tasks which face it.

(Mr. Skotnikov, Russian Federation)

Last year Russia continued, through its actions, to demonstrate its resolve, based on the tried and tested bilateral and multilateral agreements, to pursue the quest for further cuts in missile and nuclear forces. Thus, in December 2001, the period set in the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START I) for reductions in strategic offensive armaments expired. The Russian Federation had in fact reduced the number of deployed strategic carriers - ICBMs, SLBMs and heavy bombers - to 1,136 units and the number of weapons on board them to 5,518 units, in other words, to levels well below those provided for in the Treaty. In May 2001 we saw the completion of the 13-year inspection activities in implementation of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF). In summary two entire classes of nuclear missiles, with ranges of, respectively, 500-1,000 and 1,000-5,500 kilometres, were eliminated from our arsenals. At the end of October, in accordance with a decision taken by the presidents of Russia, the United States and Ukraine dated 14 January 1994, the last nuclear weapon removed from Ukrainian territory was destroyed.

In this endeavour, we continue to insist that the nuclear disarmament process must be speeded up and strategic stability must be consolidated.

We have repeatedly stated our position on further reductions in strategic offensive arms: these must, first of all, be drastic, second, verifiable, third irreversible. That is to say, strategic offensive weapons must not merely be reduced on paper. We have implemented START I; we have ratified START II. Furthermore, we have submitted to the United States a draft START III. It is no fault of Russia that START II has not entered into force.

Particular attention should be given to the decision by the United States to withdraw unilaterally from the ABM Treaty. The President of the Russian Federation has already stated his view that this step was a big mistake. In addition, we cannot but agree with the assessment of the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, contained in the address to our Conference which has just been read to us by his representative.

We have always emphasized that the issues of strategic stability and the ABM Treaty go far beyond the mere bounds of Russian-American relations. All these problems have a global dimension. They directly affect international stability and security, a circumstance which was confirmed in the adoption by the General Assembly - by an overwhelming majority of votes - of a resolution in defence of the ABM Treaty. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those delegations which, for the last three years, have supported this resolution.

As we see it, the decision by the United States to withdraw from the Treaty is not guided by any wish to find ways of responding to a real missile threat. This decision reflects a certain approach, a unilateral approach, which runs counter to the security interests of other countries and of the international community as a whole. We would like to express the hope that,

(Mr. Skotnikov, Russian Federation)

following their action on the ABM Treaty, the United States will not act in a similar manner with other arms control and disarmament agreements. We would like to count on the continued application of the positive experience which has been accumulated in international security over the last few decades. All this must be preserved and built upon as the foundation for continued constructive and purposeful dialogue.

We are convinced that the problem of missile proliferation can and must be resolved without demolishing the existing strategic stability architecture. As a counterweight to attempts to introduce a military solution to problems - something which can only aggravate the situation, we propose a different approach: political and diplomatic measures, plus the Russian initiatives on a global control system. We are ready to engage in the broadest possible consultations, on a non-discriminatory basis with all interested countries, on the whole range of missile non-proliferation issues.

We consider that negotiations on sweeping reductions in strategic offensive weapons must be continued. Back in November 2000, President Putin announced the levels of warheads that we would be prepared to accept - namely, 1,500 and less. It is very significant that, during the visit of President Putin to the United States of America, the American administration made clear its own position, as between 1,700 and 2,200 nuclear units.

We are keen on achieving legally binding agreements in this area and, in this regard, we are working on the premise that offensive and defensive systems are interrelated - an interrelationship confirmed by the presidents of Russia and the United States at their meeting in Ljubljana. The Russian Federation will do everything within its power to achieve agreement on this matter. This would have as its result the breakthrough in nuclear disarmament that is so badly needed.

While working on the bilateral track we intend to continue and to diversify our multilateral efforts. Here I would like to recall our proposal that the permanent members of the Security Council set up a standing consultative process on nuclear disarmament and strategic stability. We believe also that we should do our utmost to promote measures within the NPT review process. In particular, we are preparing for serious work in April 2002 at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference.

With regard to the decision taken by the United States to withdraw from the ABM Treaty, we are extremely concerned at what is probably the most negative of all the possible consequences of such a step, namely, the spread of the arms race to outer space. Prevention of that scenario remains one of our main priorities and represents an issue of concern to the entire international community. That concern was eloquently expressed in the message to the conference held in Moscow in April 2001 on the theme: "Weapon-free outer space - an arena for peaceful cooperation in the twenty-first century" by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

(Mr. Skotnikov, Russian Federation)

In his message Mr. Annan said: "We must guard against the misuse of outer space and, in particular, against the creation of an arms race in outer space. The international community recognized early on that a legal regime for outer space was needed to prevent it from becoming another arena of military confrontation."

The desire of the international community to take effective steps to prevent weapons entering space was confirmed in resolution 56/23 on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session and supported by 156 States and opposed by none.

In this connection I would like to draw the attention of Conference participants to the proposals made at the General Assembly by the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ivanov, on possible elements which might serve as a basis for a comprehensive agreement on the non-deployment of weapons in outer space. An important component of that Russian initiative is the proposal to place a moratorium on the deployment in space of any means of warfare, pending agreement on that issue by the international community. Russia would be ready to enter without delay into such a commitment, provided that other leading space Powers also joined the moratorium.

The Russian delegation would like to see the launching of intensive negotiations on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) here in the Conference on Disarmament. In this context it is our belief that painstaking and systematic work has already been carried out on this matter over a period of some 10 years, between 1985 and 1994, in the relevant ad hoc committee. Many useful initiatives and proposals have already been advanced and these, in our view, should also be taken into account in the future. Recently new ideas have come to the fore. Thus, we support the specific proposals by the delegation of China, set forth in the Conference's working document entitled: "Possible elements of the future international legal instrument on the prevention of the weaponization of outer space". We take a positive view of the groundwork done by Canada on the non-deployment of weapons in outer space; the French ideas on a notification regime for the launching of space objects and ballistic missiles; and other proposals made by members of our Conference.

We reaffirm our commitment to common efforts to seek compromise on the Conference's programme of work. In 2001 the Russian delegation submitted a package proposal on the subject, providing for the establishment of an ad hoc committee to consider nuclear disarmament issues with the simultaneous establishment of an ad hoc committee on PAROS with a negotiating mandate. As we see it, our package responds to the aspirations of the overwhelming majority of members of the Conference. We are grateful to all those delegations which reacted constructively to our initiative. We are ready to engage in further dialogue to improve our proposals and are convinced that, if we make sufficient joint efforts, we will finally manage to launch substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Skotnikov, Russian Federation)

We support the commencement of work on a treaty to prohibit the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear devices (FMCT). In this connection we would like to see the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee with a negotiating mandate and without linkages to any other issues. As our discussions proceed on the issue of the programme of work, we will comment in greater detail on other items of our agenda.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

As there appears to be no other delegation that wishes to take the floor, we have concluded our work for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 24 January 2002, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.890
24 January 2002

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND NINETIETH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 24 January 2002, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Mohamed Tawfik (Egypt)

GE.02-60328 (E) 110202 180202

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I declare open the 890th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I should like to express my appreciation for the cooperation shown by all delegations, which has made it possible for us to reach agreement on our agenda at the very first meeting of the year. And I would like us to build upon this good beginning in order to produce a substantive programme of work for the Conference. To that end, I intend to make the best possible use of the time available to do as much work as we can, in conformity with the rules of procedure.

I shall now suspend the plenary meeting and shall convene informal, open-ended consultations to consider the various ideas which we might have on a programme of work. We will then resume the plenary to hear any statements that delegations may wish to make. First, does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? Since I see no delegation asking for the floor, I shall now suspend the plenary meeting. We shall reconvene in 10 minutes' time in an informal session that will be open to member States and observer States only. The informal meeting will be followed by the resumed 890th plenary meeting. The plenary meeting is now suspended.

The meeting was suspended at 10.20 a.m. and resumed at 12.10 p.m.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): The 890th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is now resumed.

I should like to extend a warm welcome to Mr. John Bolton, the United States Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, who will be addressing the Conference today. You have the floor, Mr. Bolton.

Mr. BOLTON (United States of America): Mr. President and distinguished delegates, it is an honour for me to address the Conference on Disarmament at the beginning of its 2002 session. At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming your office. I can assure you of the full support of the United States in carrying out your duties. I would also like to recognize the outstanding Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, a counterpart of mine on United Nations matters during the first Bush Administration.

It is a particular honour for me today to be able to introduce the new United States Ambassador to the Conference, Eric Javits, who comes to you after a long career specializing in what he characterizes as "difficult negotiations". He clearly has the proper background for the Conference on Disarmament and has the full support of the Bush Administration as he strives in this distinguished Conference to advance international peace and security.

Permit me to outline to this body, the world's oldest multilateral arms control negotiating forum, the fundamental elements of the Bush Administration's security policy. Our timing is particularly opportune. The 11 September terrorist attacks have made all too clear the grave

(Mr. Bolton, United States)

threats to civilized nations that come from terrorists who strike without warning, their State sponsors, and rogue States that seek weapons of mass destruction. We must defend our homelands, our forces, and our friends and allies against these threats. And we must insist on holding accountable States that violate their non-proliferation commitments.

The fight against terrorism will remain a top international security priority. As President Bush said: "Our lives, our way of life, and our every hope for the world depend on a single commitment: The authors of mass murder must be defeated, and never allowed to gain or use the weapons of mass destruction." The United States and its partners in this fight will meet this threat with every method at their disposal.

Above all, we are acting to end State sponsorship of terror. The United States believes that with very few exceptions, terrorist groups have not acquired and cannot acquire weapons of mass destruction without the support of nation-States. This support might be technical assistance. It might be funding. Perhaps such assistance has taken the form of simply turning a blind eye to terrorist camps within one's borders. But the fact that Governments which sponsor terrorist groups are also pursuing chemical, biological, nuclear and missile programmes is alarming and cannot be ignored.

Nations that assist terror are playing a dangerous game. As President Bush stated to a joint session of the United States Congress last fall: "We will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbour or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime."

If the 11 September terrorist attacks taught the United States nothing else, it taught us not to underestimate the intentions and capabilities of rogue States and terrorist groups. We will not be complacent to the threat of any kind of attack on the United States, especially from weapons of mass destruction, whether chemical, biological, nuclear, or from missiles.

On chemical weapons, the United States is alarmed by the continuing spread of dangerous technology to countries pursuing illegal programmes. The United States is a strong proponent of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which provides several useful tools to combat chemical warfare programmes. The United States has made effective use of the consultation provision of article IX of the Convention, to address our questions and compliance concerns. To date, we have conducted several visits at the invitation of other States parties in a cooperative effort to resolve these questions and compliance concerns. In many cases, this has proved to be highly successful.

The United States will continue to use such consultation mechanisms to enhance verification and promote full compliance with the provisions of the Convention. Although bilateral consultations are not a prerequisite for launching a challenge inspection, the United States believes that challenge inspections may in some cases be the most appropriate mechanism for resolving compliance concerns.

(Mr. Bolton, United States)

Some States parties have sought erroneously to characterize the challenge inspection process as tantamount to an abuse of political power. On the contrary, challenge inspections were included as a fundamental component of the CWC verification regime that benefits all States parties, both as a deterrent to would-be violators and as a fact-finding tool to address compliance concerns. They are a flexible and indispensable tool that, if viewed realistically and used judiciously, can be instrumental in achieving the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention. I caution those nations that are violating the Chemical Weapons Convention: you should not be smug in the assumption that your chemical warfare programme will never be uncovered and exposed to the international community.

On biological weapons, the United States made its position crystal-clear at the Fifth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) late last year: we will not condone violation of the BWC. We flatly oppose flawed diplomatic arrangements that purport to strengthen the BWC but actually increase the spectre of biological warfare by not effectively confronting the serious problem of BWC non-compliance. It is for this reason that the United States rejected the draft protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention and the continuation of the BWC Ad Hoc Group and its mandate, and offered an alternative way ahead.

Regarding the BWC protocol, the United States was urged to go along with this proposal because it was "flawed, but better than nothing". After an exhaustive evaluation within the United States Government, we decided that the protocol was actually counterproductive. New approaches and new ways of thinking are needed to prevent the proliferation of biological weapons.

The United States presented a number of new proposals to do just this, including tightened national export controls, fully implementing the BWC by nationally criminalizing activity that violates it, intensified non-proliferation activities, increased domestic preparedness and controls, enhanced bio-defence and counter-bio-terrorism capabilities, and innovative measures against disease outbreaks. Many, if not all of these measures, can begin to be implemented now. We look forward to discussing and refining them with all of you and hope that you will join us in endorsing and beginning to implement them as we prepare for the resumption of the BWC Review Conference next November.

On nuclear weapons, the United States recently completed a nuclear posture review, the basic conclusions of which have recently been made public. Fundamental to this review is the assumption that the United States and Russia are no longer adversaries and, therefore, that such cold war notions as mutual-assured destruction are no longer appropriate as the defining characteristic of our strategic relationship. Accordingly, President Bush has announced that the United States will reduce its strategic nuclear force to a total of between 1,700 and 2,200 operationally deployed strategic warheads over the next 10 years. President Putin has made a similarly bold and historic decision with respect to Russian Strategic nuclear forces.

(Mr. Bolton, United States)

Given the new relationship between Moscow and Washington, the spectre of nuclear war between the United States and the Russian Federation is now a comfortingly remote possibility. More likely is the possibility of the use of nuclear or radiological weapons by rogue States or terrorist groups. We are also currently faced with dangerously-high tensions in south Asia between India and Pakistan, both of which have nuclear explosive devices.

The proliferation of nuclear materials and technology is a serious threat to international security. The International Atomic Energy Agency's nuclear inspection system must be reinforced, as we press others to adopt strengthened IAEA safeguards designed to detect clandestine nuclear activities. The United States continues to emphasize the importance of universal adherence to, as well as full compliance with and implementation of, the NPT and comprehensive safeguards. Countries such as North Korea and Iraq must cease their violations of the NPT and allow IAEA to do its work. In addition, I caution those who think that they can pursue nuclear weapons without detection: the United States and its allies will prove you wrong.

And let me reiterate United States policy on nuclear weapons proliferation: the United States regards the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology as a direct threat to international security, and will treat it accordingly. The same holds true for nations that traffic in deadly chemical and biological weapons technology, and missile systems.

Almost every State that actively sponsors terror is known to be seeking weapons of mass destruction and the missiles to deliver them at longer and longer ranges. Their hope is to blackmail the civilized world into abandoning the war on terror. They want the United States and others to forsake their friends and allies and security commitments around the world. 11 September reinforced our resolve to build a limited missile-defence shield to defend our nation, friends, forces and interests against missile attacks from rogue States and terrorist organizations that wish to destroy civilized society.

It is an undeniable fact that the United States simply has no defence against a missile attack on our homeland. While we do have defences against shorter-range missiles, we have none against even a single missile launched against our cities. We must fill this void in our defences. As a result, we announced last month our decision to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. This was an important decision for the Bush Administration and was made in close consultation with Moscow. Although our Russian friends did not agree with our withdrawal decision, the world is aware of the close and growing relationship between our two nations. Our new strategic relationship is much broader than the ABM Treaty, as evidenced by the announcement by both the United States and Russia that we will reduce our offensive nuclear arsenals to the lowest levels in decades.

We are also concerned about the spread of missile technology that may not threaten the United States at this time, but poses serious threats to our friends and allies, as well as to deployed United States forces. Too many nations are remiss in not controlling their involvement in the proliferation of missile technology. We are aware of a long list of missile-proliferation

(Mr. Bolton, United States)

activities by enterprises from at least a dozen nations. Most of these transactions are serious, and could result in United States sanctions, as has happened several times over the past year. The United States calls on all countries to control missile-related transfers and ensure that private companies operating within their borders cease illegal missile transactions.

President Bush has made clear the imperative of restructuring deterrence and defence capabilities to formulate a comprehensive strategy to enhance our security. This strategy must include strengthening non-proliferation measures (prevention), more robust counter-proliferation capabilities (protection), and a new concept of deterrence, relying more on missile defence and less on offensive nuclear forces.

In this context, the security and well-being of the United States and its allies depend on the ability to operate in space. America is committed to the exploration and use of outer space by all nations for peaceful purposes for the benefit of humanity - purposes that allow defence and intelligence-related activities in pursuit of national security goals. We remain firmly committed to the Outer Space Treaty, and we believe that the current international regime regulating the use of space meets all our purposes. We see no need for new agreements.

This point leads me to touch briefly on the future of this body, the Conference on Disarmament. If it remains deadlocked in futility, it will continue to lose credibility and the attention of the world. To be productive and contribute to international security, the Conference must change the way it does business. It must focus on new threats, such as efforts by terrorist groups to acquire weapons of mass destruction. It must squarely face the serious problem of violations of weapons of mass destruction, non-proliferation regimes and treaties. Finally, in order to perform a useful function, the Conference on Disarmament must put aside irreconcilable differences and work on issues that are ready for negotiation, such as a fissile material cut-off treaty. I know of no one more qualified to help lead a new approach here in the Conference on Disarmament than Eric Javits, who has already begun working with delegates to find ways to move this body forward in 2002.

I have one personal favour to ask the distinguished delegates in this room. It has become fashionable to characterize my country as "unilateralist" and against all arms control agreements. Nonetheless, our commitment to multilateral regimes to promote non-proliferation and international security has never been as strong as it is today, through numerous arms control treaties and non-proliferation arrangements, including the NPT, CFE, CWC, BWC, LTBT, PNET and the TTBT, as well as to non-proliferation regimes like the Zangger Committee, the NSG, MTCR, the Wassenaar Arrangement and the Australia Group. In fact, trying to characterize our policy as "unilateralist" or "multilateralist" is a futile exercise. Our policy is, quite simply, pro-American, as you would expect.

The main emphasis of the Bush Administration's arms control policy is the determination to enforce existing treaties, and to seek treaties and arrangements that meet today's threats to peace and stability, not yesterday's. Fundamental to the Bush Administration's policy is the

commitment to honour our arms control agreements, and to insist that other nations live up to them as well. Now is the time for the Conference on Disarmament to build on its achievements to forge additional restraints against the spread of weapons of mass destruction. This is Ambassador Javit's mission here, for which he has my full support and that of my Government.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank you for your statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of Iraq. You have the floor, Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. AL-NIMA (Iraq) (translated from Arabic): In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. First of all I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of this important Conference. I wish you every success in conducting the work of this session.

Mr. President, I feel it is necessary to clarify my country's position with regard to the allegation made in the statement by the United States representative.

It is clear that the United States position towards Iraq is a hostile one. The allegation contained in the statement by the representative of the United States of America is not based on an objective position. We therefore ask the members of the Conference to be very wary of taking the allegation at face value.

The United States representative says that Iraq has violated the Non-Proliferation Treaty and prevented the International Atomic Energy Agency from doings its work properly. Not only is this claim untrue, it is also inconsistent with the facts. The reports submitted by the International Atomic Energy Agency to the Security Council since 1992 have shown that Iraq does not have any nuclear materials. The United States of America prevented the Security Council from adopting the Agency's most recent report, which was submitted to the Council in July 1998 and quite clearly stated that Iraq had fulfilled its obligations under Security Council resolution 687 (1991).

Iraq reaffirms its commitment to the NPT. Members of the Agency have visited Iraq to check whether there are any nuclear materials left in Iraq. Iraq, in accordance with its international commitments under the NPT, reaffirms its willingness to engage in this type of cooperation as well as its commitment to these international instruments.

The speaker's words reveal the double standards which are constantly at play. He has maligned two countries by accusing them of violating the NPT, but made no mention of other countries that have violated that treaty, because they are friends of the United States of America. I refer in particular to the Zionist entity, that has scores of nuclear weapons, representing a grave threat to peace and security in the Middle East. Yet he made not a single reference to that entity. He did not even ask it to open up its nuclear facilities to international inspectors. I would like to remind the United States representative of the provisions of paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) calling for the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free from nuclear weapons. What has his country done to implement that paragraph in order to preserve international peace and security?

(Mr. Al-Nima, Iraq)

In conclusion, I should like to draw attention to the irresponsible policies pursued by the United States of America on the issue of disarmament, particularly its recent abrogation of the ABM Treaty concluded between the United States of America and the Soviet Union in 1972, after six years of hard negotiations. The United States of America has also categorically rejected the Biological Weapons Convention Protocol. Its policies have had a negative impact on the work of the Conference, and its selectivity has undermined its work as a whole.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): Thank you for that statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The distinguished representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea now has the floor.

Mr. RI (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you, as I am speaking for the first time, on your assumption of the presidency. My delegation will, of course, make a formal statement on the matters raised by the United States delegation, but briefly I would just like to respond to some points.

My delegation categorically denies the allegations made by the United States delegation, by Mr. Bolton, with regard to my country. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is complying and fulfilling its obligations stipulated in the agreement signed between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States in 1994. We suspended our nuclear-power stations and facilities listed in the agreement under the surveillance of the IAEA, and, furthermore, an IAEA delegation was recently invited to our country to see some additional nuclear laboratories. This is our flexibility with the agreement. Because of the shutdown of our national power stations, we are experiencing heavy losses. We lack electricity and because of this lack, our economy and industry are suffering greatly.

Even though up to now we have been scrupulously fulfilling our obligations, the United States, on the contrary, has not shown the same spirit. For example, under the agreement, the United States is responsible for building two reactors in my country by 2003. Now the United States is saying that the two reactors cannot be finished at least until 2007, and the heavy oil that is supposed to be supplied by the United States under the agreement is sometimes delayed by between two and six months, and sometimes there is friction between Congress and the Administration. Because of this we cannot get the heavy oil in time. It causes a great deal of difficulty in our economy.

In spite of this the United States continues to make allegations and criticizes our country for not fulfilling our obligations and of other things. All this is totally unacceptable. Our country is small, divided and weak, and the United States is a super-Power, and they can do whatever they wish, and yet they still say that our country is a threat to the United States. The United States cannot sell these ideas to anybody. Our Government clearly states that we have no intention of attacking any country or threatening any country in the world, unless we are attacked

(Mr. Ri, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

by somebody - be it even the United States or anyone else in the world. We will not tolerate any kind of threat or invasion. We will fight to the last person. This is the position of our Government. What I would like to say is that the United States does not need to make such allegations in international meetings - allegations which cannot possibly be accepted by anybody.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): Thank you for your statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I see that no delegation is asking for the floor and, therefore, we have concluded our work for this meeting. The next plenary meeting will be held on Thursday, 31 January 2002.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.891
31 January 2002

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND NINETY-FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 31 January 2002, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Mohamed Tawfik (Egypt)

GE.02-60426 (E) 180202 010302

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I declare open the 891st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I should like to extend, on behalf of the Conference, a warm welcome to the new Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ambassador Antoine Mindua Kesia-Mbe, and I should like to assure him of our cooperation in his new assignment.

On my list of speakers for today I have the representatives of Australia and Brazil and the Ambassador of Colombia, on behalf of the Group of 21. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia, Ambassador Les Luck.

Mr. LUCK (Australia): Mr. President, at the outset, I would like to extend to you my warm congratulations and best wishes formally - since this is the first time I have taken the floor - on your appointment as President of the Conference and assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in seeking progress in the work of the Conference this year.

May I also, through you, Mr. President, express the very best wishes to all the many colleagues who have left our company in the months since we last met, including your own former ambassador, Ambassador Fayza Aboulnaga, who was indeed a very close colleague and friend, but there are many others, of course, who have left us, and may I also extend a warm welcome to our many new colleagues - and they are many - I shall not list them all, but let me just say how much we look forward to working constructively with each and every one of them.

Mr. President, we are facing important challenges in international security. A changing global strategic environment and the growing risk of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems, including to non-State actors, require renewed efforts to build a more secure world.

Few would disagree that 2001 was a particularly difficult year on the disarmament front. Since its inception, the Conference on Disarmament has played a central role in developing a multilateral arms control and disarmament regime. Despite the myriad of challenges we now face, however, it is of considerable disappointment to Australia that, for several years now, we have been unable to agree on a work programme for the Conference on Disarmament, let alone contribute in any substantive way to consideration of the range of complex and pressing issues that we have before us.

Frankly speaking, the Conference on Disarmament is in danger of becoming marginalized in international efforts to address the various security challenges that we face. While Australia recognizes that many such challenges fall outside the traditional purview of the Conference on Disarmament, we believe that we are duty-bound to use this important forum more effectively to advance those key arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation objectives that we have collectively identified as worthy of our attention.

(Mr. Luck, Australia)

Australia remains firmly committed to a strong, relevant and dynamic Conference on Disarmament and urges all member States to reach the necessary compromises to allow consensus on a programme of work at this session.

In this regard, Australia, for its part, believes that the proposed programme of work put forward in mid-2000 by the former distinguished representative of Brazil, Ambassador Amorim, in his capacity as president of the Conference, presents us with a realistic and balanced approach, which takes into account the interests of all members of the Conference.

I would ask delegations to consider whether it is better to see such a programme of work adopted, or whether it is preferable to let the CD languish for yet another year, unable to commence discussions even on those issues where there is broad support and where there is a real prospect of progress.

A key priority for Australia is the early commencement of negotiations for a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). It is most disappointing that FMCT negotiations are yet to begin despite the FMCT having been repeatedly endorsed as the logical next step on the arms control and disarmament agenda, most recently in a consensus resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. FMCT negotiations would also be a timely and welcome vote of confidence in multilateral arms control and disarmament.

There have been suggestions that a cut-off treaty would benefit non-proliferation but do little to advance nuclear disarmament. This is not a view which we share. We need look no further than the final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference to see the relevance of the FMCT to nuclear disarmament. A cut-off treaty would facilitate progress on key disarmament outcomes of the 2000 final document. Capping the amount of fissile material available for use in weapons is essential to achieving irreversible nuclear disarmament. A cut-off treaty would also be a central and indispensable element of any verification regime for a world free of nuclear weapons, furthering the call in the 2000 final document for the development of verification capabilities for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

It is our firm hope that the Conference on Disarmament will make an early start on cut-off negotiations. But we are conscious that much time has been lost. We have a fresh opportunity now to initiate a programme of work, including negotiation of an FMCT. Australia is fully supportive of efforts to do this. If that cannot be done, however, Australia would see value in further informal work on FMCT issues, building on the workshops and seminars held last year. Such work would in no way be intended to undermine or replace the Conference on Disarmament, but to assist it. We hope that by facilitating progress on cut-off issues in the absence of formal negotiations, such informal work would pave the way for more rapid progress when formal negotiations begin in the Conference. Pending the emergence of the FMCT we urge all relevant States to join a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Luck, Australia)

I would also like to take this occasion to register the value and inherent complementarity with the overarching aims of the Conference on Disarmament of various non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament initiatives and instruments supported by Australia.

The NPT remains essential to our efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, facilitate access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and advance nuclear disarmament. The start of the 2005 NPT review cycle, with the first meeting of the NPT preparatory committee scheduled for April this year in New York, renders it still more important that the Conference get back to work. A functioning Conference on Disarmament would demonstrate our collective commitment to progress on important 2000 NPT Review Conference outcomes. We look to all NPT parties to bring to the review process a spirit of cooperation consistent with our shared interests in maintaining and strengthening this vital treaty.

Australia's strong support for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is based on the practical view that a complete ban on all nuclear testing is in our security interests, and the interests of all. We are disappointed that the CTBT is not yet in force. But with 165 signatories and 89 ratifications there should be no doubt that the CTBT has firmly established a powerful international norm against nuclear testing. We and many others will continue working until CTBT entry-into-force is achieved and we take this opportunity once again to urge those yet to sign or ratify the CTBT to do so without delay. Until the treaty enters into force the existing moratoriums on nuclear testing must be maintained.

Australia is committed to the universal adoption of a non-binding international code of conduct against ballistic missile proliferation. We have taken a close interest in the drafting of the code and would urge all States to support the code as a sign of their commitment to ballistic missile non-proliferation. A revised draft code has recently been circulated for consideration and we call on all States to participate in the first open-ended negotiating session, to be held in Paris next month.

Australia shares the disappointment expressed by many States at our inability to reach agreement on a substantive programme of work at the recent Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention. Australia worked hard with other delegations, both in the lead up to and during the Review Conference, to secure a number of practical initiatives to strengthen the BWC at this crucial time. While this was not possible, we take heart in the fact that States parties have agreed to reconvene the Review Conference later this year. We look forward to working with delegations over the coming year to develop specific proposals to ensure the continuing relevance and vitality of the Convention.

By contrast, the success of the Chemical Weapons Convention stands out. The CWC is the only international treaty, supported by a full verification regime, which bans a whole class of weapons. As the Convention nears its sixth year of operation, it is essential that this momentum does not falter and that the authority and credibility of the Convention are not in any way diminished. The strength and efficacy of the CWC is the responsibility of all States parties. Australia urges all parties to recommit themselves to the CWC through the timely and comprehensive fulfilment of their obligations under the Convention.

(Mr. Luck, Australia)

Australia remains a major contributor to international mine action. We are strongly committed to universalization of the Ottawa Convention and welcome the rapid progress which has been made in expanding the number of its adherents, currently 122 States parties and an additional 20 signatory States. We urge those parties which have not yet done so to accede to the Convention as soon as possible and, in the interim, to refrain from the laying of anti-personnel landmines, given the risks to civilian populations.

Mr. President, I had the honour of being appointed President of the Second Review Conference of the CCW, which, as you are aware, took place in December 2001. We were pleased that the Review Conference agreed to expand the Convention's scope and to establish a group of experts to consider further steps which might be taken to reduce the impact of the explosive remnants of war and anti-vehicle mines. Australia hopes that the goodwill and cooperative spirit among delegations to the CCW Review Conference can carry over into this forum, and assist us in achieving a long-overdue agreement on a programme of work.

Finally, Australia wishes to welcome the recently announced commitment of both the United States and Russia substantially to reduce their respective nuclear arsenals. Now that the United States has taken a decision to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, we would urge both major Powers to intensify their dialogue on a new strategic framework that complements multilateral arms control and disarmament efforts and leads to enhanced global security.

In conclusion, Mr. President, there is much to be understood and discussed about the international strategic environment, which has shown fluidity and uncertainty in recent times. It presents both challenges and opportunities. We need to comprehend how we can best pursue long-standing goals for international peace and security in this changing environment. Collectively, we have denied ourselves the opportunity to have genuine and substantive discussions in this forum for a number of years. We can allow this to continue no longer. While we may not oe perfectly satisfied with the options before us, we believe that we must now make the most of the best opportunity - namely, that encapsulated in the Amorim proposal - which we have yet been able to devise for taking our work forward.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Australia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

On my list I now have Brazil. I welcome Ambassador Luis Felipe Seixas Corrêa. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. SEIXAS CORRÊA (Brazil): Mr. President, let me begin by expressing my satisfaction at seeing you, a distinguished representative of Egypt, a close friend of Brazil, a country fully committed to the cause of nuclear disarmament, and a New Agenda partner, preside over the Conference on Disarmament. At this crucial stage, with our annual session just beginning and expectations all the greater, you may count on the full cooperation of the Brazilian delegation. I wish you all success in your endeavours.

(Mr. Seixas Corrêa, Brazil)

I would also like to express my appreciation to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference, and to his deputy, Ambassador Enrique Román-Morey, for their valuable support.

Mr. President, as I assume my responsibilities as head of the Brazilian Mission in Geneva, I wish to take this opportunity to make a few general comments and to expand on a number of policy matters that are of importance to us.

The events that have unfolded since last September have brought sorrow and distress to the whole world. We were all made abruptly aware of the fragility of our sense of security and well-being. Perhaps because of that, because we all felt ourselves in one way or another to be victims of the attacks of 11 September, an unprecedented consensus emerged as to the need to deal decisively with the hideous crime of terrorism. We can none of us safely say that we do not share this sense of insecurity and vulnerability. Security issues have become dominant in our agenda. The terrorist attacks and the possibility that their perpetrators could make use of weapons of mass destruction have highlighted the importance of the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes based on multilaterally negotiated instruments. As stated by the United Nations Secretary-General in his address to the General Assembly on international terrorism, we now feel more than at any other point in recent history the need to ensure "the universality, verification and full implementation of key treaties relating to weapons of mass destruction, including those outlawing chemical and biological weapons and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty".

In this context, recent developments in the international security environment and the new challenges facing the international community in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and international security are a matter of deep concern for Brazil.

My country has a long-standing commitment to peace and disarmament. Ever since the early years of the Eighteen Nations Disarmament Committee and the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament we have acted in a constructive and cooperative manner. We do not believe in the logic of any system that relies on the stockpiling and the refining of armaments in order to ensure stability. We respect the United Nations Charter and we remain convinced that disarmament cannot be separated from the more general process of promoting the rule of law. We believe that issues relating to international security are of a universal nature and that they require multilateral responses within a framework of collective responsibility. It is our perception that, in terms of stability and predictability, nothing can replace multilaterally negotiated, legally-binding instruments. We stand committed to the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament, as well as to the cause of general and complete disarmament, under effective international control. Moreover, we are determined to accomplish the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

Those are the principles that have guided and will continue to guide Brazil in this forum. I thought it appropriate to re-state them as we engage in the Conference's 2002 session.

(Mr. Seixas Corrêa, Brazil)

Some will say that this year - like many other years in the past - will go by and nothing will happen. World public opinion perhaps no longer believes in the possibility of breakthroughs in our proceedings. People are indeed disenchanted with the way things have been progressing - or to put it more appropriately, not progressing in this forum.

Maybe they are right. But maybe not. And while there is a glimmer of hope, there is a reason for us to persevere.

The Conference on Disarmament is starting its fourth consecutive annual session without a programme of work. I will abstain from digressing on this point and simply add my voice to those who have been stressing the implications of the current paralysis for the credibility of the Conference. We have before us a proposal for a programme of work. After more than one year expressing and reiterating support for document CD/1624, as a basis for further consultations, it is time to show the political will necessary to bridge the differences that prevent us from agreeing on a programme of work.

It is imperative to overcome immobility, as you, Mr. President, so pertinently remarked in your opening statement. Let us thus persevere.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons and the absence of a firm commitment to their total elimination constitute an incentive for potential proliferation. It follows that the indefinite retention of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States is incompatible with the preservation of the integrity and sustainability of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and with the broader goal of the maintenance of international peace and security.

Brazil strongly favours disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament, with the preservation and full compliance of all treaties and agreements already achieved in this field, as President Fernando Henrique Cardoso highlighted during his recent visit to Moscow.

Having in mind the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, one cannot but look back at the important outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and underline the unequivocal commitment then given by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. The 2000 NPT Review Conference agreed on a detailed programme of action for nuclear disarmament, the so-called 13 steps of which provide a blueprint to assess the systematic and progressive efforts to implement article VI of the NPT. The Brazilian Congress gave legislative approval to the accession of Brazil to the NPT, on the understanding that the obligations contained in article VI would be fully and duly implemented. Starting next April, the preparatory process of the 2005 NPT Review Conference will test the willingness of the nuclear-weapon States to live up to their commitments and to the expectations they have generated. Let us persevere.

For virtually one and a half centuries, my country has been at peace with all its neighbours. We are proud to belong to a region free of international conflicts and historically attached to peace and to the cause of disarmament.

(Mr. Seixas Corrêa, Brazil)

The commitment of the Latin American and Caribbean countries to international peace and security is reflected in a number of regional and subregional instruments. In the field of weapons of mass destruction, the Treaty of Tlateloco, of 1967, which created the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in an inhabited area of the world, is a meaningful example of that determination. In the Southern Cone, even prior to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Argentina, Brazil and Chile renounced, by the 1991 Mendoza Accord, the use, production, acquisition, stockpiling and transfer of chemical and biological weapons. We were subsequently joined by Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia and Ecuador. The Political Declaration of Ushuaia, in 1998, established the Mercosur countries, and also Bolivia and Chile, as a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. More recently, the presidents of all the countries of South America decided to establish a South American zone of peace, as announced at the summit hosted by President Cardoso in Brasilia in September 2000.

Mr. President, let me conclude by paying tribute to my predecessor, Ambassador Celso Amorim, who, building on the valuable work of his predecessors - among them Ambassador Dembri and Ambassador Lint - crafted, as President of the Conference on Disarmament, a proposal that is still a reference for the Conference. The proposal contained in document CD/1624 has the merit of being endowed with what is termed in diplomatic language a certain "constructive ambiguity" that could be further explored. What we need is just the right degree of flexibility that will allow us to move forward without having any party lose sight of its vital security interests.

I do hope we will be able to get things moving in a positive way. It is never too late. Let us persevere.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the Ambassador for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. On my list of speakers I now have the distinguished representative of Colombia, Ambassador Camilo Reyes Rodríguez. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. REYES RODRÍGUEZ (Colombia) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, since this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor at this session of the Conference on Disarmament, allow me to congratulate you on having assumed the leadership of our work, to thank you for the efforts that are being made to achieve agreement on the programme of work and to assure you of the total support and cooperation of the Group of 21 in carrying out your responsibilities.

Mr. President, I should now like to read out a statement by the Group of 21. Since that statement was negotiated in English, I shall read it out in that language.

(Continued in English)

(Mr. Reyes Rodríguez, Colombia)

"Statement by the Group of 21:

"The Group of 21 expresses its satisfaction that the Conference has adopted its agenda for the 2002 session. This session of the Conference on Disarmament commences its work against a backdrop of serious and multifarious challenges facing the international community in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation in all its aspects and international security, particularly the attempts to justify the perspective of indefinite possession of nuclear arsenals, related concepts of nuclear deterrents, including a revised strategic framework, and elements aimed to open more scope for possible use or threat of the use of force.

"The Group stresses that, as the single multilateral negotiating forum in disarmament, the Conference's programme of work should be responsive to these challenges and the interests and priorities of all its members in the aspirations of the international community in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation in all its aspects and international peace and security. The Group expresses its concern that the Conference on Disarmament was unable to take substantive work on the basis of an agreed programme of work since 1999, in spite of the demonstrated flexibility shown by the Group and the number of formal and informal proposals introduced by some of its members during their presidency of the Conference, namely the Rodríguez Cedeño proposal, the Dembri proposal and the Amorim proposal. The Group reaffirms its readiness to participate constructively in all efforts aimed at reaching agreement on a programme of work which is comprehensive and reflects the priorities of all the member States of the Conference on Disarmament.

"In this context, the Group reaffirms its proposal contained in CD/1570 and CD/1571 on the programme of work and a draft decision and mandate for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

"The Group emphasizes that nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority for the Conference on Disarmament. It stresses the importance of the possibility of nuclear war, the threats to humanity derived from the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the possible use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. It underscores the need to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons and emphasizes, in this regard, the urgent need to commence negotiations without delay.

"The Group is seriously concerned about the lack of progress as expected following the unequivocal undertaking by nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, made during the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

"The Group has already expressed, in document CD/1549 of 12 August 1998, its position with regard to the establishment of an ad hoc committee under agenda item 1, entitled 'Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament', which shall negotiate on the basis of the report of the special coordinator (CD/1299) and the mandate

(Mr. Reyes Rodríguez, Colombia)

contained therein, a non-discriminatory, multilateral, internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

"The prevention of an arms race in outer space has assumed greater urgency because of legitimate concerns that existing legal instruments are inadequate to deter imminent attempts for the further militarization of outer space. The possible consequences of the decision by one of the State parties to the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missiles (ABM) to withdraw from the Treaty brings new challenges in this issue. In accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/23, the Group emphasizes the urgent need for commencement of substantive work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

"While various approaches exist, the Group expresses its conviction that efforts for the conclusion of a universal and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be pursued.

"Having in mind the context of the Conference on Disarmament, the Group is deeply concerned about the progressive erosion of multilateralism and emphasizes the importance of collective international efforts to enhance and maintain international peace and security. This can be best addressed through multilaterally negotiated non-discriminatory disarmament and non-proliferation treaties.

"The Group hopes that the Conference will commence early substantive work during the 2002 annual session and, to this end, affirms its readiness to participate constructively in all efforts aimed at reaching agreement on the programme of work. The Group urges other groups to display matching flexibility and calls upon the President of the Conference to intensify efforts aimed at finding agreement on a programme of work, so that the substantive work of the Conference can commence without delay, in accordance with the rules of procedure."

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the distinguished Ambassador for that statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair.

We have now completed our list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this time? I see there are none.

I should now like to invite you to take a decision on the requests of Costa Rica, Philippines and Slovenia to participate as observers in the work of the Conference during this session, without having first considered them in an informal plenary. These requests are contained in document CD/WP.524, which is before you.

May I take it that Conference decides to invite Costa Rica, Philippines and Slovenia to participate in our work in accordance with the rules of procedure?

(The President)

It was so decided.

This concludes our business for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I see no delegation asking for the floor.

Ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen. As we have reached the end of the Conference's second week of work, I should like to summarize the results of the informal consultations which I have conducted on the Conference's programme of work since Egypt assumed the presidency of the Conference at the beginning of this year's annual session.

First of all, I should like to stress that I endeavoured to ensure that those consultations were conducted in accordance with the rules of procedure and with the Conference's decision on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament (CD/1036), and in a spirit of complete transparency. I also endeavoured to hold informal consultations over the last week to allow all delegations to state their positions and views on the Conference's programme of work and to make the statements which we have heard during the plenary. I should like to express my appreciation and gratitude to all the delegations which exchanged their ideas with me on that subject.

I can state that, throughout the consultations, I sensed a great eagerness on the part of the members of the Conference to preserve the credibility of the Conference as the only multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations. I also sensed the real concern felt by many delegations at the continued paralysis in the Conference's work, at a time when the world is witnessing sweeping changes in all domains, including in the field of disarmament. In that regard, all the delegations with which I consulted have affirmed their commitment to the multilateral approach to disarmament, particularly in the light of international events affecting the international disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation machinery.

In spite of what I have just said, I am unable, at present, to provide you with a quick solution to the paralysis which has beset the Conference for so many years. This situation has been brought about by international circumstances with which we are all familiar and has nothing to do with any shortcomings in the Conference's ways of working. The Presidency will do everything in its power to reach agreement on the Conference's programme of work by examining options and alternatives that could allow us to begin our substantive work, in keeping with the aspirations of member States to achieve international peace and security for all.

I welcome any proposals and ideas in that connection and encourage all delegations to take advantage of plenaries to state their positions and raise any issues concerning the agenda which they consider important.

Following that brief account, I should like to inform you that the next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 7 February 2002, at 10 a.m. in this room.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.892
7 February 2002

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND NINETY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 7 February 2002, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Mohamed Tawfik (Egypt)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I declare open the 892nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I should like to express my appreciation to one of our esteemed colleagues, Ambassador Clive Pearson of New Zealand, whose assignment as the representative of his country at the Conference on Disarmament has recently come to an end.

Ambassador Pearson joined the Conference on Disarmament in 1997 and has represented his country with consummate diplomatic skill. His deep commitment to resolving the outstanding issues relating to the Conference's programme of work has made a positive impact that has been acknowledged by all. We shall remember Ambassador Pearson in particular for the vital role that he played during the 2000 NPT Review Conference in efforts to reach consensus on the practical steps to be taken towards implementation of article 6 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It has been my personal privilege to work and cooperate with Ambassador Pearson in more than one forum, since our two States belong to a group of countries which take a special interest in questions of nuclear disarmament. I should also like to express my deep appreciation of the hard work and great skills which he has deployed.

Ambassador Pearson has left an indelible mark on the disarmament process. On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament, and on my own behalf, I should like to wish him every success and happiness in the future. I should also like to extend a warm welcome to the Permanent Representative of New Zealand, Ambassador Tim Caughley and assure him of our full cooperation as he undertakes his duties.

I have the following speakers on my list for today: Ambassador Hu of China, Ambassador Broucher of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ambassador Westdal of Canada, Ambassador Javits of the United States of America, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Ms. Anna Lindh.

I now give the floor to the Ambassador of China.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, allow me, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, to congratulate you on your assumption of the first presidency of the 2002 session of the Conference and to express appreciation for your unremitting efforts to expedite the early commencement of substantive work in the Conference. It is my hope that, under your guidance, the Conference on Disarmament will be able to make a fresh start on a sound basis at this early stage in the year. I also wish to take this opportunity to convey our heartfelt thanks to Ambassador Roberto Betancourt Ruales for the valuable contribution that he made during his presidency.

As the sole multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament, the Conference on Disarmament serves as a barometer of the international political and security environment. This environment, in its turn, has a direct bearing on the Conference's work and progress. Let us not

(Mr. Hu, China)

deceive ourselves: the international arms control and disarmament process is currently facing a grave situation and is up against enormous difficulties. The ABM Treaty, which was recognized by the international community at the NPT 2000 Review Conference as the cornerstone of strategic stability, is about to be rendered null and void. The seven-year-long negotiations on a protocol to strengthen the BWC have been set at naught and the ad hoc group has suspended its work, its future uncertain. The CTBT has been rejected and its future prospects are dismal and there is now even a possibility that nuclear tests will resume. All this has inevitably had a negative impact on mutual trust among States and overall confidence in multilateral efforts in the field of arms control and disarmament.

Against this backdrop, we are deeply convinced of the need for the Conference on Disarmament to address such fundamental issues as the status and role of the existing legal regime for arms control and disarmament; the direction to be taken by international arms control and disarmament efforts; and the best means of establishing and preserving global strategic stability. This will undoubtedly help guide the Conference towards the future launching of its substantive work.

Arms control and disarmament are not the exclusive preserve of a mere handful of States; multilateral disarmament treaties are concluded through negotiations among a great many States and, as such, they embody the common will of the international community. Thanks to efforts conducted over the past decades on a global scale, a relatively comprehensive legal regime for international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation has been put in place, covering nuclear, chemical, biological and certain types of conventional weapons. The treaties concluded during the cold war era, such as the NPT, ABM and BWC, and those concluded after the cold war, such as the CWC and CTBT, have all manifested humankind's relentless pursuit of international peace and security through arms control and disarmament. This legal regime has become an essential component of the global collective security structure centred on the United Nations and also plays a crucial role in maintaining global and regional security and stability. This role should be preserved and further enhanced.

Yet this legal regime is now confronted with unprecedented challenges, prominent among which are attempts to replace international cooperation with unilateral actions and the adoption of a politically expedient approach to international legal instruments in the interests of one country's own "absolute security". As a result, we have witnessed such developments as the abrogation of the ABM Treaty - the very cornerstone of international strategic stability; the pursuit of self-interest and the application of double standards in non-proliferation issues; the adoption by a country of a strict position to others in matters of treaty compliance, but a lenient one to itself, to the extent of passing domestic legislation which distorts the obligations provided for in international treaties; insistence on the speedy conclusion of a treaty with an extremely strict verification regime during negotiations, followed by a volte-face on conclusion of the treaty and categorical refusal to ratify it. All these actions have not only eroded the stature and impartiality of international arms control and disarmament treaties, but also impaired confidence among States.

(Mr. Hu, China)

Given this new situation, it is the shared responsibility of the international community to preserve the integrity and the authority of the international arms control and disarmament system, as this system is of vital importance to maintaining international peace and security. Countries should work together to preserve and promote the system in a spirit of cooperation rather than confrontation, with the application of a uniform standard rather than double, or even multiple, standards and consistency in the adoption of their relevant policies and positions. Any conduct that seeks to undermine this legal regime will prove to be short-sighted and will only add to the uncertainty and unpredictability of the international security situation.

In December 2001, following the announcement of withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, President Jiang Zemin of China stressed to President Putin and President Bush how essential it was, in the current situation, to safeguard the international arms control and disarmament system and affirmed that China stood ready with the rest of the world to continue its efforts in maintaining international peace and stability. That stated position will continue to guide the efforts of my delegation.

Over the last two years, in the face of increasingly negative tendencies in international affairs, the Chinese delegation has repeatedly stressed that international arms control and disarmament endeavours are now at a difficult crossroad. Confronted with such a grave situation, we need to reflect on the future course to be followed by the arms control and disarmament process.

In our view, the future course and objectives of the arms control and disarmament process should be as follows: preservation of global strategic stability; consolidation, development and promotion of the existing treaty system in the realm of arms control and disarmament; prevention of the introduction of weapons or weapon systems into outer space; complete prohibition and total destruction of all nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; and non-proliferation of such weapons and their means of delivery.

Certain basic requirements must be met for the above objectives to be attained. First, a new concept of security based on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation should be established. The cold war mentality and power politics should be eschewed and disputes between States should be settled through dialogue and cooperation. Disarmament is aimed at enhancing security and that security must be enjoyed by all without exception. There can be no tranquillity in the world as a whole so long as the vast majority of developing countries are without security. Second, efforts should be made to strengthen cooperation in the field of global arms control and disarmament, not to weaken it; unilateral and expediency-based approaches in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation must be shunned. Arms control and disarmament should not be exploited as a tool whereby strong countries can control the small and the weak, or as a means for one country to optimize its military build-up so as to gain unilateral superiority. Nor should any one country be allowed to ensure its own absolute security at the expense of the security of others. If a common understanding can be reached on these basic points, the confidence and trust of States and their willingness to work together can be restored and the global arms control and disarmament process can be guided out of its current deadlock back on to the right track.

(Mr. Hu, China)

With the evolution of the international security situation and the increasing number of non-traditional threats from diverse sources, the existing international arms control and disarmament regime needs to be further strengthened and developed. Only through multilateral and collective cooperation can terrorism, the common enemy of the security of all countries, be eliminated. The healthy development of arms control and disarmament efforts will undoubtedly contribute to the global war against terrorism. This effort also requires multilateral cooperation, however, since its objective is to ensure collective security. It is our belief that the international arms control and disarmament process should continue to be centred on the negotiation and conscientious implementation of legally binding treaties. These treaties should be verifiable and be equipped among their basic elements with mechanisms dealing with non-compliance. The issuing by States of unilateral statements of a voluntary nature can only serve as a measure complementary to arms control and disarmament.

The ABM Treaty, which has helped underpin international strategic equilibrium and stability for almost 30 years, will soon be revoked. The question which must now urgently be addressed is how global strategic balance and stability are to be achieved and preserved in these new circumstances. In our view, the following principles and measures are of vital importance:

- A sustainable, strategic stability framework based on international legal mechanisms should be set in place and maintained;

- The negotiations between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on a new strategic framework should take into account the interests of every State and aim at ensuring common security. They should address the security concerns of all countries and should be open and transparent;

- The major nuclear Powers should make further cuts in their immense nuclear arsenals. These cuts should be verifiable and irreversible and achieved through legally binding instruments;

- The CTBT, which aims to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, should be respected and ratified and should enter into force;

- The nuclear-weapon States should continue to honour their commitment to mutual detargeting. Use of the "first-use policy" as a nuclear deterrence strategy should be abandoned;

- Measures should be taken to prevent the weaponization of an arms race in outer space.

Now that the ABM Treaty has been scrapped and efforts are being stepped up to develop missile defence and outer space weapon systems, there is an increasing risk of outer space being weaponized. Against this backdrop it is our view that the Conference on Disarmament should, in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/23, establish an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space with a negotiating mandate and

(Mr. Hu, China)

should conclude an international legal instrument on the issue at an early date. To this end, China has submitted a working paper entitled "Possible elements for the future international legal instrument on the prevention of the weaponization of outer space" in document CD/1645. We are ready to listen to comments and suggestions by all sides in a flexible and open-minded spirit. With regard to the mandate of the ad hoc committee on prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), my delegation has submitted a paper on the issue contained in document CD/1576. We also continue to support the draft mandates on PAROS proposed by the Group of 21 and the delegation of the Russian Federation, which are contained in documents CD/1570 and CD/1644, respectively. We hope that, on this basis, the CD can resume its substantive work without further delay, including the launching of negotiations on such important issues as nuclear disarmament and a fissile material cut-off treaty.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the Ambassador of China for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Mr. David Broucher.

Mr. BROUCHER (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, let me take the opportunity of this, my first statement to the Conference on Disarmament, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. I will not add to your burden by stressing the responsibility that lies on your shoulders as President, but I will assure you of the support of the delegation of the United Kingdom in bearing that burden and my own willingness to help in whatever way I can your efforts to move forward our work.

Let me also thank my colleagues in the Conference for the warmth and the cooperative spirit that I have experienced since my arrival in Geneva.

Before my arrival in Geneva last year, my previous involvement in disarmament issues had been in the early 1980s - a time when we were still mired in the stale disputes that characterized much of what passed for international negotiation during the cold war. It was with that in mind that, last year, in my first report to London as disarmament ambassador here, I said that I saw some important improvements in the arms control scene. Many others apart from me in this room know the value of the CWC, the NPT extension, the CTBT, the Ottawa Convention - to name only a few - because we remember times when they seemed out of reach. The Conference on Disarmament made its contribution to those important advances, and others, in the early and mid-1990s. I am glad that the United Kingdom was also able to use the historic changes in the 1990s to make some real advances in disarmament. Our unilateral reductions since the end of the cold war mean that the potential explosive power of Britain's operationally available nuclear warheads has been reduced by more than 70 per cent.

As the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, said in a speech on this subject yesterday, arms control "has been one of the outstanding successes of international policy" of the last 50 years. But having made these important advances, the international community is now in danger of getting stuck again. The past 12 months have brought some successes -

(Mr. Broucher, United Kingdom)

one thinks of the agreement of a programme of action on small arms and the good results that we had at the end of 2001 from the CCW Review Conference. But we remember the past year as much for its disappointments - including the inability of the parties to the Biological Weapons Convention to agree to measures to strengthen that regime. Here in the Conference on Disarmament we remember our failure, for the third year running, to agree on a work programme. The momentum for progress in international arms control, so increased during the last decade, has been running down for those three years at least. We badly need to reinvigorate our work here and more generally.

Above all we must not risk squandering some of the achievements and agreements that our predecessors worked so hard to achieve. The world is in many ways a more dangerous and unpredictable place now than it was in the cold war. The possible use of weapons of mass destruction is more a real threat to civilian populations than has ever been the case before and this knowledge contributes to the sense of threat that people feel, and the risks that conflict entails.

It was my predecessor's privilege to be sitting where you are now when the Conference on Disarmament last adopted a programme of work, in 1998. The Conference has done no substantive work since then. By my calculation that means that ambassadors of the countries represented here have trooped into this room more than 70 times - and each time they have been unable to find a way out of the continuing impasse. They have not used facilities available to them from the United Nations for more then 2,000 hours of negotiation. It is no wonder that there is a tendency to keep, or to take, arms control initiatives out of the Conference on Disarmament.

Nor are the consequences confined to the Conference on Disarmament. In April, at its first session, the preparatory committee for the next Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty will talk about the implementation of that treaty. It is disappointing that the Conference on Disarmament has not so far responded to the call of the last NPT Review Conference to begin negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, an utterly indispensable step for moving towards nuclear disarmament. And this is despite the fact that there has been international consensus on a negotiating mandate for such a treaty for more than six years. Jack Straw confirmed in his speech yesterday the United Kingdom's firm support for a fissile material cut-off treaty, and our determination that the Conference on Disarmament should overcome the road-blocks and move forward.

Over the last 12 months, the Amorim proposals have commanded the Conference's attention as the best opportunity for starting work. Since August 2000, nothing better has come along, nor does it look likely to. Indeed, nothing better is needed, in my country's view, since the Amorim proposals protect the vital interests of every country in this Conference. Obviously there are differences of view: in particular over whether there should be a treaty negotiation on outer space. But the best way to get an agreement on that would be to start the debate on it that

(Mr. Broucher, United Kingdom)

would take place in an ad hoc committee - as allowed for by the Amorim proposals. The United Kingdom is keen for the Conference on Disarmament to start work on its whole work programme.

In his statement yesterday, Jack Straw noted the despair in some quarters that "the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is inevitable, and that our only hope lies in deterrence, defence and, in the last resort, retaliation". It is true, he said, that "proliferation continues, often in States which reject internationally agreed standards of decency, and that this means we cannot afford to regard the existing body of arms control methods as comprehensive". New times and new challenges need new responses. But they do not make the old responses worthless. The United Kingdom has played an active role in the negotiation and implementation of arms control agreements. We will carry on doing so, in fields as diverse as the strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention the forthcoming negotiation on explosive remnants of war and continuing work of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO and many more.

The work done by the Conference on Disarmament, and by these other institutions, has made the world safer. I am determined that the Conference on Disarmament should be active and should work to advance disarmament. The Conference is currently a bastion of procrastination and inactivity, and we must work together to change it into an effective vehicle for progress and real achievement.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I should now like to suspend the meeting in order to greet the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden and accompany her to the Council Chamber.

The meeting was suspended at 10.45 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): The plenary meeting is resumed. I now give the floor to the representative of Canada, Ambassador Christopher Westdal.

Mr. WESTDAL (Canada): Given your well-known expertise, Mr. President, your energy and your effectiveness and your professional and national commitment to the goals of our Conference, I am pleased indeed to congratulate you on your assumption and conduct to date of the presidency. You can count on Canada's support. We will do all we can to help in the search for consensus on a programme of work of value in multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament.

Be assured as well, Mr. President, that recalling our own efforts in your place a year ago, we harbour no illusions about your prospects - or the extent of your own personal responsibility for our inactivity - in the event that the combined visions and security postures of major players continue to preclude wholehearted multilateralism and the political will and the specific instructions we delegates need to be able to work here.

(Mr. Westdal, Canada)

The months since we last met, in the aftermath of 11 September 2001, have been eventful in our field, full of implications that we strive to understand. Some of them are no mystery. For a start, given that the explosive attack on the World Trade Towers was equivalent to less than 1,000 tonnes of TNT (with no radioactive fallout), it surely deepened our commitment to nuclear disarmament by reminding us what hideous damage thermonuclear megatons - thousands and thousands of TNT tonnes - would wreak.

Second, the attacks, along with subsequent proof that terrorists seek and will use anthrax and other means, have spurred urgent priority for the non-proliferation and the security of the materials of all weapons of mass destruction.

The attacks have also of course provoked forceful and effective self-defence by the United States, with massive political support from allies and partners, from the United Nations Security Council and from the world community. As to the more general threat of weapons of mass destruction, President Bush could not have made it clearer than he did when addressing the state of the Union: "The United States will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons".

As profoundly, Mr. President, the attacks startled the human spirit, provoking a great wave of outrage and potent global sentiments of sympathy, of vulnerability and of solidarity, which have sustained the massive coalition against terror and have fostered historic new amity in major power relations.

Finally in this short list, the ubiquitous dangers of terrorism by weapons of mass destruction and the breadth and depth of international cooperation since 11 September have reminded us that no country, however weak or disorganized, however strong and able, is alone on this planet. We are all in this together, our fates intertwined. In the language of the First Committee last fall, multilateralism is a core principle of international security.

In theory, that is. In fact, in a recent survey of our field, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Jayantha Dhanapala, described and lamented what he called "the debris of multilateral disarmament endeavours". From the CTBT and the struggle to bring full legal force to its ban on nuclear testing to the BWC, the failure of its protocol negotiations and last December's derailed Review Conference; from the prospects for the fulfilment of the NPT 13 steps to the search for a post-ABM strategic framework and the context in which strategic arsenals might be cooperatively (and, ideally, transparently and irreversibly) reduced; and from a challenged IAEA to a cash-starved OPCW, there is a pervasive sense of crisis in our field. Part of it - a symptom not a cause (in that we do not write our own instructions) - is our lack of work.

Against this background, it is my purpose now to review several dimensions of our predicament and related prerequisites for the use of this Conference, including the vision which we need to prevail in the world if we are going to be able to get back to work here.

(Mr. Westdal, Canada)

I begin with a critical but regularly overlooked dimension of instruments of non-proliferation, foremost among them the NPT: and that is the credibility of the commitment to disarmament. The NPT's inherent discrimination is acceptable only in a larger context of coherent commitment and credible progress toward disarmament. Without article VI, the NPT would not exist - and without its fulfilment over time, the Treaty will lose its seminal value. It can be convenient to forget, but in our bedrock, the NPT, non-proliferation and disarmament are mutually interdependent. Whatever that means in precise numbers and dates, it has to mean a vision of a world free of arsenals capable of human extinction and it has to mean credible progress toward that goal. That is why Canada welcomed the strategic reductions in train and in prospect in the United States and Russia.

I think Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala was getting at the same truth about non-proliferation in his recent speech to the Arms Control Association in Washington, when he emphasized that multilateral cooperation in our field must be global and non-discriminatory, as well as fair and equitable, to have much chance of long-term success.

Non-proliferation is not cost-free, but its cost is well worth paying. There cannot for long be one rule for some and another for others. That is a truth we all know in our homes and our communities. It is the value in equality before the law, a surely essential dimension of political sustainability.

Mr. President, although 11 September was not we stress, a failure of arms control, a second prominent dimension of the current crisis in our field is obviously non-compliance. Indeed, the value of multilateral pacts is regularly dismissed by some on the grounds that some parties cheat. I think that argument, often presented as quasi-axiomatic, is no such thing. It bears scant scrutiny. We do not abandon the law when it gets broken. When that happens - indeed, precisely because that happens - we try harder to enforce it.

And when we find essential laws beyond our powers of multilateral enforcement, as now, and must rely instead on national power internationally reinforced, we ought not back away from those essential laws against weapons of mass destruction and the struggle to enforce them. We should much rather turn to that historical imperative with urgent new purpose and resolve.

And let us be honest about our work in multilateral compliance and enforcement: we have not lately been trying hard enough - or trying effectively enough - to strengthen our various treaties' monitoring and enforcement provisions, to promote their universal acceptance and to ensure that they have the resources which they need. The test ban is not in force, IAEA and OPCW are under-funded and the BWC is toothless. More generally, we have not scratched the surface of the robust potential of verification and have only just begun to take advantage of powerful new technologies available for enforcement.

And these days, when we think about the scope and the reach of our technologies and witness the unprecedented power of large and comprehensively integrated weapons systems and when we consider the consequences of their possible further elaborations, we should not

(Mr. Westdal, Canada)

overlook another great power, the power for human progress available through transparent accountability. It is an old engine of human progress, holding parties to their sworn word for all the world to see and mobilizing the threat or reality of exposure and shame to spur reform and change ways. Permanence with strengthened accountability, we should recall, was the basis of the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995. Further deepened accountability through such means as, perhaps, enhanced reporting will be explored at the NPT Preparatory Committee in April - and beyond, in the Treaty's vital reviews.

In recent debate about means of non-proliferation, I have heard proposed enforcement regimes and measures dismissed on the grounds that they could not themselves provide guaranteed security. Let me put that straw man down. No one sensible ever said that these multilateral measures were in themselves sufficient. Each one of them is valuable and, combined, progressively more effective; they are essential and we need to go on strengthening them, but our recognition that they do no yet suffice, that they are not yet as effective as we need them to be, is perfectly clear in our support for supplementary measures ranging from export controls to military action against terrorism if and as need be. In other words, we already have what we may call "Multilateralism Plus", with the NPT plus UNSCOM, when needed, and the BWC and CWC plus export controls, and so on as need be in the face of utterly compelling threats of weapons of mass destruction.

Finally on this subject, allow me to say a few words about the risk that the law will serve the lawless. I believe that the playwright Robert Bolt, in A Man For All Seasons, gave Thomas More great lines on the subject. When More is challenged, "So now you'd give the Devil benefit of law!" he replies, "Yes. What would you do? Cut a great road through the law to get after the Devil?" His companion responds, "I'd cut down every law in England to do that!" And then More's point: "Oh? And when the last law was down, and the Devil turned round on you - where would you hide ..., the laws all being flat? This country's planted thick with laws from coast to coast - Man's laws, not God's - and if you cut them down - and you're just the man to do it - d'you really think you could stand upright in the winds that would blow then?" "Yes", More concludes, "I'd give the Devil benefit of the law, for my own safety's sake".

Mr. President, I endorse the calls that we have heard here for "new thinking". Indeed, without some - and it should be good - I believe that our prospects for useful work in this Conference will stay slim. Let me sketch from Canada's vantage-point the vision which, in our view, should prevail in the world if we are to fulfil our mandate here to prepare and negotiate legally-binding multilateral agreements.

The vision that we need to prevail must comprehend both necessary self-defence, like that under way today, and our common enduring need for multilateral institutions and international law as strong and as well-enforced as we can make them. It is clear - and it is right and fitting - that so long as our treaties and their enforcement cannot do the job, it must be done by others. It shall not knowingly be left undone.

(Mr. Westdal, Canada)

We know that we would only be fooling ourselves - at grave risk to our own security - were we to ignore the inadequacies of the current multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament system. At the same time, we know that for the long haul, given that sustained vigilance and effective law enforcement depend crucially on the full cooperation of national Governments and that such cooperation is best invoked through international law, the engagement of all States in collective, binding multilateralism is essential in countering ubiquitous weapons of mass destruction threats. Our pressing responsibility is to reinforce multilateral agreements and national capacities not yet up to the task.

Current multilateral arrangements are not at all wisely supposed to offer guarantees, 100 per cent effectiveness. Far from it. As Under-Secretary Bolton said here about challenge inspections, though, they do offer a measure of valuable confidence by promoting transparency and good behaviour, by deterring would-be violators and by providing a fact-finding tool to address compliance concerns. It needs to be recalled that any measure of security gained through multilateral enforcement is a measure which States need not feel so inclined to seek elsewhere through vastly more expensive arsenals.

Canada welcomed the recent plans and steps to reduce the size of nuclear arsenals and their operational readiness; those steps move us closer to disarmament and lessen the risk of nuclear war. That said, if they turn out not to be transparent, codified or irreversible, these strategic reductions could generate as much disappointment and suspicion as confidence.

We need a vision true to our deepest values to prevail. We need it to sanctify life itself and time and earth and human meaning in the clear light of their manifest, astonishing and surely sufficient divinities. In that light, massive nuclear arsenals hair-triggered to end all that we are for ever and to foul this planet too are a dark stain on our meaning, our dignity and our age, a stain which it should be our natural duty to remove.

We need a vision of human solidarity to prevail. There is more and deeper human unity on this planet now than there was on 10 September. We felt its force on 11 September and we have seen it at work since. These are not just passing shows of shared human sentiment and spirit. They are quite real, with immense long-term consequence. They have attended dramatic widespread realignments and solidarity against extremist security threats. We should want to work hard in multilateral settings to sustain and gain by this fresh momentum in global sentiment and solidarity, this felt quickening of the human spirit.

We should have no illusion that an inexorably interdependent world is going to be comfortable or readily managed, but it is surely clear that, among other measures across a range - from diplomacy and law enforcement to economic and military action - we need to make the very best we can of international law and progressively more effective multilateral structures with stronger and more broadly-based powers of enforcement.

(Mr. Westdal, Canada)

The vision needs to prevail that reciprocal transparency and intrusiveness are essential in effective multilateralism; all States must share both the burdens and the benefits of binding pacts. The vision which we need is inclusive and participatory, imbued with respect for the interests and opinions of each, while faithful to the common good, because survival will always be everybody's business. The vision which we need counts us all in, from the most powerful to the least, and it disciplines us all alike, from the least powerful to the most. In that vision, quests for national security are inseparable from quests for a sustainable security framework for all of us on earth. The phrase is well-worn for good reason: international security is indivisible.

In sum, the vision needs to prevail that sustainable global security is best sought - for the benefit of all, particularly the most powerful, who have the most to protect and have the means to gain the most - through inclusive, enfranchising multilateralism. As we human beings evolve - or not - such essential global coherence and as we get busy - or not - building the norms, attitudes and institutions required, Canada sees multilateral arms control and current national action not as conflicting imperatives but rather as essential and complementary dimensions of effective response to compelling threats of mass destruction.

Canada's positions on the various issues before this Conference are well known. It is our belief - reinforced in the course of our stint in the Chair this time last year - that the Amorim proposal remains our best hope. Because its consequence is our lack of work, we are constantly reminded that the one last gap in the Amorim programme (where verbs are still needed and not agreed) is to say just what we would do first on PAROS. But we should not let that small gap blind us to the programme's great potential for progress and momentum. The Amorim programme would engage all parties - earnestly, given the temper of these times - in this unique forum dealing multilaterally with nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, security assurances and fissile material negotiations. Such multilateral engagement of major players is central in the vision that I have sketched of sustainable security. Work like that in the Amorim programme would transform this Conference and win new ground for hope worldwide. (I should add here that Canada would be prepared to address missile issues as well, should this subject ever be added to our active agenda.) As to the chance for consensus, it is clear that priorities still vary, but the compromise required to get us to work has been clearly defined and painstakingly distilled. To my delegation, it does not appear immense.

Finally, Mr. President, we see value in the mandates and ongoing work of our three special coordinators. These are no substitute for substantive work, but they may facilitate progress once a work programme has been agreed.

Should the prospect of consensus agreement on a programme of work not be imminent, our responsibility remains to keep good custody of this unique institution, to make the best use we can of it to prepare for future work and to take pains to sustain the orientation and vantage, the focus and the disarmament expertise that it has gathered. We welcome reflection here on the search for multilateral security as a means to promote and prepare for negotiations. Discussion and debate deepen understanding. We can also usefully consider the political role of the Conference and whether it might add value in public information and education.

(Mr. Westdal, Canada)

We should remember that this Conference in which we are gathered is a tool of proven value, a shop that has delivered the goods before, global public goods, and can do so again. It is a poor workman that blames his tools, Mr. President, and a hapless tool that takes the rap.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the representative of Canada for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Eric Javits.

Mr. JAVITS (United States of America): Mr. President, as a recent arrival to Geneva and a newcomer to duties in this body, I would like to express my appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to many other colleagues who have welcomed me in such warm and friendly ways. I assure you that I shall do everything I can to cooperate with your efforts in the presidency, and with theirs, to reinvigorate the Conference on Disarmament and begin fulfilling our primary task: negotiating global treaties in the field of arms control and disarmament.

Much of what I will say today has already been said by others, and I ask your indulgence if I echo sentiments often expressed here. Yet letting one another know where we stand is an indispensable element of seeking consensus in this august body.

So, to be perfectly blunt: after so many years of deadlock and delay, to waste yet another year would be an evasion of our collective responsibility. History may judge at what point this comatose body actually expired, or at what stage continued inaction became dereliction of duty or even inexcusable negligence. In any case, these questions would eventually arise.

I do not want them asked or answered. No, Mr. President, my Government and I want the Conference at long last to adopt a comprehensive programme of work along the lines proposed by one of your most distinguished predecessors, Ambassador Celso Amorim of Brazil.

Last 11 September, criminal terrorists carried out perfidious and appallingly destructive attacks in New York and Washington. Within the ensuing days and weeks, many countries joined with the United States in confronting and combating this assault on innocent civilians and on the fundamental tenets of civilization itself.

We deeply appreciated this demonstration of solidarity in the common cause. We are encouraged that there has been substantial progress in rooting out the al-Qa'ida network and that the oppressive Taliban regime has been overthrown. This has enabled the people of Afghanistan to form an interim Government that is far more attuned to their aspirations and needs.

History may eventually cite the 11 September events as a turning point in our mutual quest for a better world, since utter revulsion at the terrorist attacks created unprecedented patterns of cooperation among Governments and peoples.

(Mr. Javits, United States)

On 14 November, President Bush and President Putin issued a joint statement in which they declared that the United States and Russia "have overcome the legacy of the cold war", adding that "neither country regards the other as an enemy or threat". The two presidents cited their joint responsibility to contribute to international security, then said that the United States and Russia "are determined to work together, and with other nations and international organizations, including the United Nations, to promote security, economic well-being, and a peaceful, prosperous, free world".

On 13 December 2001, President Bush announced that the United States would withdraw from the 1972 ABM Treaty pursuant to its provisions that permit withdrawal after six months' notice. The United States knows with certainty that some States, including a number that have sponsored terrorist attacks in the past, are investing heavily to acquire ballistic missiles that could conceivably be used against the United States, its allies and its friends. Although this is an especially sinister development in and of itself, it is compounded by the fact that many of these same States, not content just to acquire missiles, are also seeking to develop chemical, biological and nuclear weapons of mass destruction. As President Bush emphasized last week in his state of the Union address, "We must prevent the terrorists and regimes who seek chemical, biological or nuclear weapons from threatening the United States and the world".

To reduce the possibility that missiles will be used as tools of coercion and aggression, the United States needs updated means of dissuasion. Judiciously limited missile defences do not just provide a shield against a stray missile or accidental launch; they are also an essential element of a strategy to discourage potential adversaries from seeking to acquire or use weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles - by removing the assurance that such weapons would have military utility.

History teaches us that, despite the best efforts of statesmen and strategists, intelligence gathering, diplomacy and deterrence measures, all of those will not always prove entirely effective. Missile defences will provide an insurance policy against the catastrophic effects of their failure, at least in relation to a handful of missiles that might be launched by accident, by a non-State actor, or by a State of particular concern.

The United States is now engaged in discussions with Russia on measures to verify reductions in nuclear warheads under the general framework established by the START I Treaty. I am confident that, in the coming months, greater attention will also be given to transparency, confidence-building measures, and expanded cooperation on missile defences. At the same time, there will also be more extensive joint work in the critically important field of non-proliferation. And the work we need to do in these regards will not be with Russia alone, by any means.

In discussions with a wide range of allies and friends, representatives of the United States Government have explained why we believe that moving beyond the ABM Treaty will contribute to international peace and security. Although the details of these discussions must of

(Mr. Javits, United States)

course remain private, we find it particularly significant that in mid-December representatives of the United States and China met in Beijing to review our withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and discuss the possible start of a broad strategic dialogue. The United States looks forward to further opportunities to explore strategic issues and appropriate methods for enhancing mutual understanding and confidence in the context of increasingly cooperative relations between the United States and China - as will be discussed on 21 and 22 February 2002, when President Bush visits Beijing at the invitation of Chinese President Jiang Zemin.

Some critics have interpreted the United States decision to withdraw from the ABM Treaty as evidence of so-called "unilateralism", in other words, a general lack of support for multilateral arms control agreements. This interpretation is lamentably mistaken.

The United States agrees that multilateralism is "a core principle in negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation with a view to maintaining and strengthening universal norms and enlarging their scope" - as stated in this year's General Assembly resolution 56/24 T. The resolution also underlined the fact that "progress is urgently needed in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation in order to help maintain international peace and security and to contribute to global efforts against terrorism", and we fully agree with that.

Certain other consensus resolutions of the General Assembly were even more directly aimed at the member States of the Conference on Disarmament. For example, resolution 56/24 J urged that the Conference on Disarmament agree on a programme of work that includes the immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty that would ban the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. In addition, resolution 56/26 B reaffirmed the role of the Conference on Disarmament as "the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community" and called on it "to fulfil that role in the light of the evolving international situation".

Let no one doubt that the United States values this Conference, and its role, as the only existing multilateral forum for arms control and disarmament negotiations. As Under-Secretary of State Bolton pointed out the United States supports and upholds many multilateral arms control agreements, such as, for example: the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1967; the Outer Space Treaty, also of the same year; the Biological Weapons Convention of 1972; the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe of 1990; and the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1992.

Although maintaining international peace and security is our primary goal and overarching purpose, in the final analysis preserving national security is likewise necessary and essential. Mutual advantage is another key factor, for any arms control treaty must enhance the security of all States parties. Basic obligations need to be well-focused, clear and practical, so States will have a rational basis for committing themselves to the future treaty. Compliance and enforcement are priority issues and also quite critical. After all, unenforceable agreements that are easily ignored make no positive contribution whatever to international peace and security.

(Mr. Javits, United States)

To the contrary, ineffective treaties can create false illusions of security that may impede or prevent realistic and quite appropriate preparations for individual or collective self-defence. One cogent example is the treaties of the 1920s and 1930s that limited the tonnage of naval warships that States parties were permitted to build. Those treaties clearly failed the test, for certain States evaded the limits by building larger and more powerful warships than those which the negotiators envisaged.

In sum, Mr. President, arms control and disarmament approaches are not all equally effective. Furthermore, they are only a means to an end, a tool that States can choose to employ - or not - in our mutual efforts to ensure international peace and security. And just as a screwdriver would be a poor choice for a carpenter who needs to hammer in a nail, it is clear that arms control and disarmament approaches may not always be suited to the circumstances at hand.

So the issue is how this forum should be employed now, after years and years of paralysis. The work programme proposals that Brazilian Ambassador Amorim tabled on 24 August 2000, embodied in CD/1624, specified that the Conference would conduct negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, pursuant to a thoughtful and complete framework that the international community has repeatedly reaffirmed - the so-called Shannon mandate and report, as drafted by former Canadian Ambassador Gerald Shannon, the Conference's Special Coordinator, and published on 24 March 1995 in CD/1299.

Ambassador Amorim also envisaged the establishment of ad hoc committees on two other high-priority topics, nuclear disarmament and outer space. In contrast, however, he proposed broad-ranging discussion of these other two high-priority topics, not treaty negotiations. This, of course, is the only appropriate approach when member States have not reached agreement on a realistic framework for seeking to negotiate a multilateral treaty.

In order to develop such a framework, member States would have to work out convincing answers to the key questions that I identified earlier. In other words, member States would need to believe that some new multilateral agreement actually would make an effective contribution to international peace and security, and that it also would not have adverse effects on national security. These conclusions, in turn, would have to be closely associated with cogent analysis of several key issues (in other words, mutual advantage, clear and practical focus on appropriate technical aspects, assurance of compliance, effective measures of enforcement).

These questions are highly complex. The answers certainly do not exist now, and the United States sees no reason to believe that they will suddenly become evident. To the contrary, we are firmly convinced that multilateral outcomes can only be the result of an extended process of transparency and engagement: transparency in regard to actions and goals, engagement in a joint search for practical solutions and mutual advantage. In that sincere and earnest search, there is no substitute, there can be no substitute for serious and thoughtful discussion. There should likewise be no doubt, that the United States delegation will engage, actively and energetically, in the work of all subordinate bodies that the Conference decides to establish.

(Mr. Javits, United States)

To permit any and all forms of active engagement, the Conference on Disarmament must finally get down to work. We have an agreed mandate for negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. We have agreement in principle that member States can conduct broad-ranging discussion in ad hoc committees that will deal with the other two high-priority issues, nuclear disarmament and outer space. In addition, we all agree that the Conference's overall programme of work can include appropriate consideration of several other substantive and procedural topics. So let us seize on commitments and goals that we all share.

Mr. President, the international community's enhanced cooperation in the aftermath of 11 September gives us added reason to hope that every member State will agree to end the deadlock and have the wisdom to engage, thereby applying our collective energies to constructive and productive tasks. In that event, history would record that the Conference on Disarmament was ultimately destined to succeed, not to wither and fade away.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

Distinguished representatives, allow me to extend a warm welcome on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Ms. Anna Lindh, who will address the Conference today. Her presence among us today is evidence of the personal interest which she takes in our deliberations and of the abiding importance that her country attaches to the Conference on Disarmament.

I am confident that we shall all listen to her statement with the utmost attention. In greeting the Minister, I should also like to express my personal appreciation for the collaboration and ongoing cooperation between our two countries in the domain of nuclear disarmament.

I now give the floor to Ms. Anna Lindh, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

Ms. LINDH (Sweden): Mr President, it is indeed a pleasure for me to be here to present Sweden's views on the international disarmament agenda and I want to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your important appointment at this crucial time.

Looking back, we have seen both progress and setbacks in our work for international disarmament and global security.

Progress, as multilateral arms control has produced impressive results, which we should not forget. Biological and chemical weapons, anti-personnel mines, and certain conventional weapons are all banned. A treaty on a ban on nuclear testing has been agreed, and the nuclear-weapon States have committed themselves to the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

(Ms. Lindh, Sweden)

But also setbacks, as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continues to threaten global security. Ballistic missile tests are carried out, and plans for a strategic missile defence create the risk of a new arms race. Setbacks, as terrorism has exposed how vulnerable the open society is to the brutal attacks of fanatical movements, supported and equipped by States and individuals who do not share our common democratic values. Setbacks, as every day civilians are maimed and killed in internal and regional conflicts and by anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war.

And to rich and poor, in North and South, the spread of and easy access to small arms and light weapons pose a growing threat in the hands of criminals and terrorists. The threats have different impact, but they have one thing in common - their consequences do not stay within national borders, but reach all of us. They are threats to our common security, and therefore require common responses.

International disarmament, non-proliferation and a world free of weapons of mass destruction are long-standing priorities for the Swedish Government. The future for all of us will depend on our ability and willingness to find common solutions to global challenges. This is evident not least after the terrorist attacks in September 2001. Such threats can only be met through international cooperation, as can other threats to human security and welfare, such as regional conflicts, discrimination, poverty and environmental problems. Our joint struggle against terrorism shows the power of common efforts. We must learn from this experience, never to let unilateral declarations and decisions prevail over multilateral agreements. Multilateral solutions are the only way forward.

I would now like to point out a number of issues where we have to improve our common efforts.

First, we must cooperate to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction. To stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles, we need global action. And our multilateral response must build on the already existing safety net against proliferation. There is an urgent need to strengthen the international framework and multilateral instruments in the field of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control. We must promote their universal adherence and ensure their effective implementation. International as well as national security depends on sustainable multilateral frameworks.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) provides a firewall against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and is really the foundation for nuclear disarmament. According to article VI of the NPT, each of the parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures for nuclear disarmament.

The NPT must include all States. There is no reason why any State should stand outside. I call on the only four States remaining outside - Cuba, India, Israel and Pakistan - to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States and to place their facilities under comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

(Ms. Lindh, Sweden)

In the year 2000 all 187 States Parties to the NPT agreed on a final document including an undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, and 12 other steps towards accomplishing that goal. The outcome was later strongly confirmed in the United Nations General Assembly.

Sweden believes that non-strategic nuclear weapons also should become an integral part of arms limitation and disarmament negotiations. We welcome the fact that commitments regarding non-strategic nuclear weapons were made at the NPT Review Conference for the first time at an international forum.

We also welcome the acknowledgement of the need both for increased transparency and irreversibility in relation to all nuclear disarmament measures, and we find it important further to develop verification capabilities to achieve and maintain a nuclear-weapon-free world. We support the search for more powerful and effective verification mechanisms, and we continue to support the important work of IAEA, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

The 2000 NPT agreement is a blueprint to achieve nuclear disarmament. The New Agenda Coalition - a group of States with a common concern about the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament and a common vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world - was very active in reaching this agreement. Now we are determined to work for its implementation, in the review cycle leading up to the next Review Conference.

Sweden - through Ambassador Henrik Salander - will be chairing this year's session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference and will make every effort to launch a productive start of the next review cycle.

Second, we must cooperate to put a definite end to nuclear testing. All States would gain from adhering to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). It sets the threshold higher for the acquisition of nuclear weapons, prevents a qualitative arms race and builds confidence through its verification system. Its entry into force should not be delayed further. We have waited long enough.

The conference on facilitating the entry into force of the CTBT, held in New York some months ago, was a show-of-force in support of the Treaty. The overwhelming majority of States clearly wish nuclear testing to be a thing of the past. We deeply regret the decision by the United States Senate to reject the CTBT and regret that the United States Administration continues to oppose ratification of the CTBT. Once again, we call upon the United States to reconsider its position. We are also concerned about reports that the United States is planning to accelerate its test-readiness programme.

(Ms. Lindh, Sweden)

I call on all States which have not yet done so to adhere to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. I also call especially on Algeria, China, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Pakistan, the United States and Viet Nam to ratify the Treaty and allow it to enter into force. Nuclear-testing should be consigned to the dustbin of history.

Third, we must cooperate to ensure compliance with international disarmament and non-proliferation agreements. In 1991, the United Nations Security Council set up a Special Commission to investigate the extensive Iraqi programmes on weapons of mass destruction and to monitor disarmament and arms control in Iraq. The task has now been taken over by the United Nations Monitoring and Verification Commission (UNMOVIC). Iraq has not fulfilled its obligations and still refuses to allow UNMOVIC access, which contributes to the destabilizing of regional and international peace and security. I call on Iraq to comply with its obligations under the United Nations Charter and resolution 1284 and to allow the international community to verify that there are no weapons of mass destruction in the country.

The additional protocol to the IAEA safeguards agreement was developed as a response to the clandestine nuclear weapons programme in Iraq. It is a major accomplishment and will help build trust that all States comply with their non-proliferation commitments. Sweden has completed the ratification procedure and the protocol will enter into force as soon as the few remaining European Union countries have ratified as planned. I hope that all States will conclude additional protocol agreements with the IAEA. When implemented, strengthened safeguards will have a very positive effect on the international non-proliferation system.

It is worrying that the IAEA is still unable to verify the correctness and completeness of the initial declaration of nuclear material made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This situation also risks complicating the implementation of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) project - a project that we fully support. I call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply fully with its safeguards agreement and to cooperate fully and promptly with IAEA.

Fourth, we must cooperate to dismantle old systems, not to build new ones. Sweden has repeatedly expressed concern that a unilateral decision by the United States to develop a strategic missile defence risks having a negative impact on international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. We are also concerned about the consequences of the American decision to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM). We hope that the continuing consultations between the United States Administration and other countries will lead to an agreed solution that will contribute positively to disarmament and non-proliferation. At the same time, I want to stress that it is unacceptable that China is using the American missile defence plans as an argument for expanding its own nuclear arms programmes. It is contrary - as shown by the examples that I have mentioned - to what is needed today, and hardly consistent with that covered by article VI of the NPT. All parties should work for a strengthening of the international disarmament process.

(Ms. Lindh, Sweden)

The Swedish Government welcomes the announcements by the United States and the Russian Federation on substantial cuts in their strategic nuclear arsenals. These unilateral declarations should be formalized in a legally binding agreement including provisions ensuring irreversibility, verification and transparency. The nuclear warheads of the strategic reductions must be destroyed, not just placed in storage. The disarmament process must be made irreversible. The nuclear-weapon States have undertaken to apply this principle to nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, it is logical that the next step will be also to include tactical nuclear weapons in the disarmament process.

The technology and knowledge needed to produce ballistic missiles is rapidly spreading, often ending up in the wrong hands and threatening both our regional and global security and stability. The terrorist attacks of 11 September have pointed to the urgent need to prevent such weapons from reaching the hands of terrorist groups. Common efforts by all States are required. To regulate ballistic missiles, as means of delivery for weapons of mass destruction, should be an integral part of disarmament efforts.

We are convinced that a universal norm against missile proliferation must be established. To this end, we have, together with our partners in the European Union, actively participated in the preparation of the draft international code of conduct against ballistic missile proliferation. At this very moment the draft code is being advanced in a meeting in Paris. We will work with all interested countries for the adoption of this code during 2002 and for it to be considered in the United Nations.

Fifth, we must cooperate to uphold the complete ban on biological and chemical weapons. The tragic events during the last months have increased the fear of proliferation of biological weapons and of bioterrorism. It is therefore more important than ever to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) as one of the tools to ensure a safer world.

The more than 140 States parties to the BWC have for a long time worked to strengthen the Convention, but it still lacks a verification mechanism. Last year was a disappointment. Our position on the proposed protocol that was presented last spring is known. We believe that the benefits far outweighed the costs, and were more than willing to support it, but consensus could unfortunately not be reached. We regret the United States position on the proposed protocol. The States parties to the Convention also failed to strengthen the Convention at the Fifth Review Conference and, instead, the Conference came to a temporary halt. I urge all States parties to be active and constructive when the Conference is resumed in November and to reach a result that will multilaterally strengthen the Convention.

The Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and the organization supervising its implementation, have now been in force for almost five years. During this time the world has seen real progress in ensuring non-proliferation, and has started the process of

(Ms. Lindh, Sweden)

destroying all chemical weapons. For the first time in history, we can actually rid the world of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. It is important that the deadlines set up under the Convention are respected and that States can be confident that the weapons have been destroyed and not merely diverted.

Sixth, we must cooperate on disarmament and arms control also in the field of conventional weapons. Weapons of mass destruction create a fear of the ultimate catastrophe among us. Still, we have to remember that conventional weapons are an ever-present threat to the lives and well-being of people in many parts of the world.

In Cambodia, Bosnia, Afghanistan and other places, children still risk being killed by anti-personnel mines while playing. In the Middle East, the escalating violence has become a cruel and threatening part of everyday life. In many countries and conflicts, the life of a human being is worth less than a bullet.

We must take special measures against conventional weapons that are particularly inhumane or have indiscriminate effects. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons was created to protect us from such weapons. One of the challenges today concerns explosive remnants of war. We are all well aware of the humanitarian consequences of the use of landmines, but otherwise legitimate weapons that fail to explode and remain on the ground as a threat to the local population have similar consequences. We welcome the decision by the Second Review Conference to mandate a group of governmental experts to study this issue and we hope that negotiations on a protocol on explosive remnants of war will start as soon as possible. We are also pleased that the scope of the Convention was extended to include internal conflicts.

The rapid entry into force of the Ottawa Convention and its large number of States parties has led to an international norm against the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel mines. But some States continue to stay outside the framework of the Convention. I call upon those States to adhere to the Convention so that we can rid the world of anti-personnel mines.

In today's world, terrorists, criminals and drug-lords thrive from the widespread availability, rapid accumulation and easy flow of small arms. They contribute to the escalation and prolonging of conflicts and weakening of already fragile societies. Sweden remains committed and active in the struggle against the adverse effects of small arms together with our partners in the European Union.

Regional commitments have been made and the foundation for global action is there. We now have to implement our commitments on stricter export controls and develop international instruments on marking, tracing and brokering. We need to improve management of stockpiles, and to destroy surplus arms. We are deeply engaged in concerted actions at the international level and support a number of small arms projects around the world.

(Ms. Lindh, Sweden)

These days we are all giving our attention to the devastating situation in Afghanistan. The international community is now making great efforts to assist the Afghan people after the Taliban regime, when it is at last time for reconciliation and the rebuilding of their war-torn country. Afghanistan is the latest, but surely not the last, example of a disintegrated society marked by violence, where we specifically need to work in the field of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants.

We have a fruitful cooperation with Norway and Canada in this field and have, together with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, contributed to international courses in Zimbabwe, Canada, Sweden and Ghana. These courses have facilitated the establishment of a pool of professionals who can be used in post-conflict situations all over the world.

Finally, Mr. President, we must cooperate to use our common instruments better. Last year proved to be another year of standstill and stalemate for the Conference on Disarmament. This is highly regrettable.

It is necessary to break the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament and get down to substantive work. It is unacceptable when nuclear-weapon States, with their special responsibility, deny the rest of the international community access to this important forum. It is not acceptable to delay the work programme by artificial links between different topics.

There is a sound basis for a balanced work programme and we believe that the Amorim proposal should be acceptable to all and are ready to start working in accordance with this proposal. It is time to start negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material (FMCT). Such a treaty will be a vital tool in halting the development of new nuclear weapons. It is time to establish a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament. This would be in line with the NPT process and the necessity of implementing the 13 steps for nuclear disarmament. It is time to deal with prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS). This is important as we see worrying signs of an increased interest in a militarization of outer space.

The Swedish Government is still hopeful that the Conference on Disarmament will be able to surmount these obstacles very soon. But we must all make special efforts to overcome the stalemate. I strongly urge you to explore all possibilities to start substantive work, and I call on all concerned States to show flexibility: fulfil your role as the only multilateral forum for negotiating disarmament! We need you and we need the progress!

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden for her statement and for her kind worlds addressed to the Chair. I see that the Ambassador of Myanmar is asking for the floor. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. MYA THAN (Myanmar): Mr. President, we are indeed honoured to have among us Her Excellency Ms. Anna Lindh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, who has just made a very important and substantive statement on disarmament issues. We have listened with great interest to her statement and have taken due note of its contents. We also have followed with great interest the important statements made by our colleagues at the plenary meeting this morning.

Allow me to begin by expressing the deep appreciation of my delegation of the effective manner in which you have been conducting the proceedings in the Conference on Disarmament. We pledge our fullest cooperation with you in your efforts to advance the Conference's work.

Mr. President, I wish to convey through you, to Minister Fayza Aboulnaga, our warm regards and best wishes for every success in her future endeavours. She has been our close friend. She has made distinctive contributions to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. We all miss her in this forum. A number of other colleagues have also left since the 2001 session of the Conference last year. We wish them all the best.

I should also like to welcome to our midst the new arrivals: Ambassador Luiz Felipe de Seixas Corrêa of Brazil, Ambassador Mohammad Reza Alborzi of Iran, Ambassador Omar Hilale of Morocco, Ambassador Tim Caughley of New Zealand, Ambassador Leonid Skotnikov of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Carlos Miranda of Spain, Ambassador David Broucher of the United Kingdom, and Ambassador Eric M. Javits of the United States of America. Some of them are our long-time close friends; some are new. We look forward to working closely with them all and wish them fruitful tenures in Geneva.

Mr. President, I shall defer my general statement to a more opportune time. This morning I should like to offer a few brief comments and suggestions.

My delegation wishes to associate itself fully with the statement of the Group of 21, delivered by the Group Coordinator, Ambassador Camilo Reyes Rodriguez of Colombia, on 31 January 2002.

There is a great interest a well as a strong desire on the part of the member States of the Conference on Disarmament to maintain its credibility as the sole multilateral negotiating forum dealing with disarmament and to overcome the current paralysis in the work of the Conference and start substantive work as soon as possible. We therefore fully support you, Mr. President, in your efforts to reach consensus on a programme of work through intensive consultations and to start substantive work at the earliest possible date. These intensive consultations on a programme of work should continue with sustained momentum until we have overcome the current impasse with a view to making progress on substantive issues in the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Mya Than, Myanmar)

While doing so, in the absence of consensus on a programme of work, we will do well to explore other avenues that will enable the Conference to carry out useful work on other issues which can facilitate and contribute to its substantive work. In this context, we believe that the Conference should now consider appointing three special coordinators, namely, a special coordinator on improved and effective functioning, a special coordinator on the expansion of the membership of the Conference and a special coordinator on the review of the agenda, to carry out their respective functions during the 2002 session of the Conference on Disarmament and to report to the Conference on their work.

I am happy to learn that you have yourself started consultations on the appointment of the three special coordinators. It is a timely step, as we are already in the third week of the 2002 session. We fully support you in this regard.

Last year, the Conference on Disarmament appointed three special coordinators on those same subjects and the special coordinators carried out useful work and submitted their respective reports to the Conference during its 2001 session. We should continue this useful exercise at the 2002 session as well. Earlier on, at the plenary meeting this morning, my dear colleague Chris Westdal has already voiced his support for the appointment of the three special coordinators. I believe that consensus is emerging on the appointment of the three special coordinators.

We also lend our support to your endeavours to find ways of making use of the provisions in paragraph 5 (d) of CD/1036 to appoint a special coordinator or special coordinators to deal with the substantive items on the agenda.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the Ambassador for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I shall of course convey your kind words to Egypt's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The Ambassador of Iraq has asked for the floor. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. AL-NIMA (Iraq) (translated from Arabic): In the Name of God, Merciful, the Compassionate! Mr. President, I should like to begin by saluting the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden for taking the trouble to attend our Conference and to make the comprehensive statement to which we listened with great care. The Minister's statement touched upon fundamental and important issues and contained ideas that merit closer examination. We have every confidence that the Conference will pay due attention to her statement.

I should like to clarify something for the Minister, not in response to her statement, but insofar as she referred to my country, Iraq. She referred to an assessment that Iraq had not fulfilled its obligations relating to the destruction, removal and rendering harmless of weapons of mass destruction. Unfortunately that assessment was clearly not based on a detailed analysis of the facts of the case, nor on an independent evaluation that took account of different points of

(Mr. Al-Nima, Iraq)

view on the subject. In its dialogue with the Secretary-General in February last year, Iraq presented a written statement of its position concerning Iraq's compliance with all its commitments under Security Council resolution 687 (1991), section C, concerning the destruction, removal and rendering harmless of weapons of mass destruction. We would have hoped that the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the relevant department therein might have studied that document in order to understand Iraq's point of view. Iraq firmly believes that it has complied with its obligations under the section in question and would have liked the Security Council to take an objective stance in order to carry out an impartial assessment of our compliance with those commitments. Because of the position of influential members of the Security Council, however, the Council has been unable to conduct that assessment and has been regularly prevented from doing so because influential States wish to maintain the embargo. Any objective assessments of Iraq's compliance with its commitments vis-à-vis disarmament would mean an end to the embargo and this is what they do not want. This is what I wanted to say. I once more salute the Minister and thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. CASTILLO (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, I would like to associate myself with previous speakers in welcoming Her Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, who has presented a very wide-ranging and comprehensive statement and has expressed legitimate concerns that we fully share. Allow me to repeat that: we fully share all the concerns that she expressed.

Mr. President, my country has kept firmly to its principles and has taken a constructive position with regard to all international disarmament instruments. As a developing country we need peace. For countries like mine, war is not a commercial business.

Mr. President, please believe that, when multilateralism prevails over unilateral designs, when the international community it its entirety, without exception, without discrimination and on an equal footing, takes real steps towards general and complete disarmament, when the threats against our sovereignty and against our territorial integrity disappear, then you may rest assured, Mr. President and Madam Minister for Foreign Affairs, that Cuba will unhesitatingly go along with all the initiatives to which you have referred. Thank you.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? The distinguished Ambassador of China has the floor.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): I have listened with close attention to the statement that has just been delivered by the distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden. While I fully agree with many of the points that she has raised, there are a small number on which I beg to differ. But I must draw attention here to the last part of her statement, where she makes reference to China's nuclear weapons programme. On the question of nuclear weapons, China has always exercised maximum restraint. Our nuclear force both at present and in the future will always be limited to the minimum level essential for the purpose of safeguarding our national security and sovereignty. The allegation by the distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden is entirely unfounded. My delegation cannot accept that statement.

Mr. RI THAE GUN (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to join other representatives in welcoming the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden and, like other representatives, I would also like to say that most of the speech made by the Minister was correct and we appreciate that contribution.

In the interests of saving time, I would just like to make a very small comment on her remarks about my country. She said that, because of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the KEDO project is in danger of delay. This is a complete misunderstanding and misinterpretation, because, under the agreement signed between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we have certain steps. When the KEDO reaches a certain stage, then the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has another obligation to fulfil. This is envisaged in the agreement. The problem is that, even though the Democratic People's Republic of Korea fulfilled its obligations under the agreement, KEDO intentionally delays its project, and that is why the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has not been able to take another step. That is the main block. This is the issue to be settled.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea appreciates the peaceful policy of Sweden and respects its policy. We are not against any aspect of the policy of the Conference on Disarmament. We respect the policy of Sweden as a peace-loving country. But this statement is based, I believe, on wrong information and information which is derived from the other side, against my country.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I see no delegation asking for the floor. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 14 February 2002 at 10 a.m., in this room.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.893
14 February 2002

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND NINETY-THIRD PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 14 February 2002, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr. Mohamed Tawfik (Egypt)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I declare open the 893rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I should like to extend a warm welcome to the new Permanent Representative of Bulgaria, Ambassador Dimiter Tzantchev. We hope to cooperate fully with him in realizing the common objectives of the Conference.

I have the following speakers on my list for today: Ambassador Hubert de la Fortelle of France, Ambassador Seiichiro Noboru of Japan, Ambassador Carlos Miranda of Spain (on behalf of the European Union) and Ambassador Mary Whelan of Ireland.

Before giving the floor to the first speaker on my list, I should like to inform you that my consultations with delegations and groups of delegations indicate a broad measure of support for my proposal concerning the appointment of three special coordinators on procedural issues. Accordingly, it is my intention to convene an informal plenary meeting, once the list of speakers is exhausted, in order to consider a draft decision on the appointment of special coordinators on the following items: the review of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament; expansion of the membership of the Conference; and the approved and effective functioning of the Conference. Subsequently, we will resume the plenary meeting to formalize any agreement reached during the informal meeting.

I now give the floor to the representative of France, Ambassador Hubert de la Fortelle.

Mr. de La FORTELLE (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, first of all allow me to congratulate you on the wise and determined way in which you have been conducting our discussions since you assumed the functions of President of the Conference on Disarmament. The task which has been set before you, namely, to put the Conference on the right track, is both difficult and delicate but you may count on the full support of my delegation.

Sir, my statement today is not directly connected to the work of the Conference. I have asked to take the floor in order to inform our colleagues of the main outcome of the meeting on the draft international code of conduct against ballistic missile proliferation, which, as you know, was held in Paris on 7 and 8 February 2002.

The idea of a code of conduct arose out of a simple observation. Missile proliferation in the world poses certain risks and it is therefore necessary that we develop an international instrument, with universal scope, which would enable us to control potentially destabilizing developments, by prompting transparency in an area where, to date, no international rule of general scope exists. The draft code of conduct which was discussed in Paris is designed to provide a response to this problem.

This text is presented as a set of general commitments, of a political nature, in such areas as non-proliferation and ballistic restraint; confidence-building and transparency measures relating to missile and space launch vehicle programmes; and principles governing cooperation in the peaceful uses of space.

(Mr. de La Fortelle, France)

On France's initiative, in July 2001 the European Union undertook to encourage the involvement of all States in a discussion on the problem, with a view to creating a universal instrument. The Paris meeting, on 7 and 8 February 2002, was the first tangible step in this direction.

The meeting may be considered a success for several reasons, but first on account of its wide participation. In all, 86 countries took part, including virtually all those States which possess missiles or space launchers.

Second, because of the focused nature of the discussions, all participants adopted a constructive approach, steering clear of polemics on this particularly complex subject. Combating missile proliferation is a very sensitive issue that involves the security interests of States sometimes in situations of regional tension. The participants embarked on a substantive discussion of the draft code of conduct that was before them.

Third, and finally, the meeting was a success because of the quality of its discussions. These enabled us to raise several interesting questions, such as the link between the draft code, on the one hand, and, on the other, the international security architecture and the United Nations in particular; the role of cooperation and assistance and the importance in this connection of the peaceful uses of space; and the relationship between confidence-building measures and the justification of missile programmes in the absence of international norms.

Among these salient features, I would just like to underline two that we consider of fundamental importance at this stage. First and foremost, all participants recognized that missile proliferation was a problem, a threat to international stability and security. Second, it was accepted that the multilateral approach, including the initiative on this code of conduct, offered one possible route towards a solution to the problem.

Mr. President, this convergence of views on these two main points is, I believe, heartening. It encouraged the Spanish presidency of the European Union to express its readiness to host a new meeting. At any event, consultations will continue, so as to assess what follow-up should be given to this initial gathering.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the Ambassador for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

I now give the floor to the representative of Japan, Ambassador Seiichiro Noboru.

Mr. NOBORU (Japan): Mr. President, distinguished delegates, at the outset, allow me to express my appreciation, Mr. President, for your leadership and for your hard work, which have enabled us to undertake the initial stage of the 2002 session of the Conference in such a positive manner. I would like to assure you of the full support of my delegation for you and for successive Presidents throughout this year.

(Mr. Noboru, Japan)

Our special thanks also go to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference, to his deputy, Ambassador Enrique Román-Morey, and to the other capable members of the secretariat for their untiring and invaluable support to the Conference.

Mr. President, now the Conference needs, more than ever, to show to the world its determination for action and its spirit of solidarity. Both are essential if the Conference is to overcome so many difficulties. The Conference must consistently be determined to pursue focused action and universality in the field of disarmament. It is not at all an easy task but crucial to global security. In addition, a spirit of solidarity is a fundamental prerequisite for the Conference to bridge gaps, find common ground and reach agreement on arms control and disarmament instruments. We, all the delegations, are here to do so. Now is a particularly opportune time to focus more on the universal concepts and commonalities among us than on differences. Time counts. After all the serious exchanges of views that have taken place over the past years, including some that were contentious, we must search even more earnestly for agreement to start our substantive work.

The Conference must resume its work immediately because of the compelling realities on the international security landscape. Humanity has already experienced so many wars and acts of terror, and it seems that these sufferings will never end. Random violence, conflicts and military confrontations still undermine stability in too many areas. Major regional conflicts are becoming even more dangerous, because of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear weapons, chemical and biological weapons and ballistic missiles.

As the 11 September incident so clearly showed, terrorism is increasingly a major threat to international peace and security. Terrorist acts are becoming ever large in their extent and terrorist networks now operate on a global scale and employ ever more sophisticated technology for their operations.

In order to cope with these immanent threats to world security, international dialogue and cooperation must be further developed at all levels. In particular, multilateral disarmament measures, which we are here to negotiate, ought to play a special role by enhancing the fundamental security conditions globally and by improving the security environments of individual countries. Multilateral disarmament measures also provide the international community with a predictable, long-lasting security landscape, thereby increasing the prospects for peace and stability.

Currently one of the topics attracting the keenest attention in the area of disarmament and arms control is strategic stability among the nuclear-weapon States. It is evident that their strategic stability has a significant impact on world security. It is also true, however, that regional conflicts and terrorism often have little relevance to that strategic stability. Global peace and security can no longer be maintained solely by a strategic balance among the nuclear-weapon States, but essentially require broader international cooperation.

(Mr. Noboru, Japan)

Some maintain that collective measures by like-minded countries or regional measures are a better means of addressing the variety of new threats than multilateral measures. This might be true in certain aspects, but the fundamental value of multilateral measures should not be too lightly dismissed. I am convinced that different approaches, including multilateral measures, should be mutually supporting and should reinforce one another so as to enhance world security.

In the twenty-first century, technological development and globalization will increase the dangers of the proliferation of weapons, because even the most advanced weapon technologies will become more and more easily available all over the world. To counter such dangers, multilateral disarmament measures will become ever more crucial. For this purpose, the international community should first endeavour to strengthen the existing multilateral measures and then to create the new ones that are necessary.

Let us first consider the existing measures. The Conference on Disarmament and its precursor organizations adopted important international legal instruments, such as NPT, BWC and CWC. These instruments constitute the foundations of current global security. They have yet, however, to become universal and free from concerns of non-compliance. The CTBT is another such significant multilateral accomplishment in disarmament, but it has not yet come into force. These problems must be addressed in order to strengthen the existing measures.

As for the second aspect, namely, the creation of new multilateral measures, that is the role of the Conference on Disarmament. Yet the Conference has not produced any new instrument since 1996, when it worked out the CTBT. It has not even achieved any substantive progress over the past three years and this is causing an extraordinary delay in the multilateral process. International security problems are only worsening with the passage of time, as the Conference has not been able to take any initiatives. This critical situation should be brought to the attention of the leaders of the international community, including the presidents or prime ministers of each and every country.

As I mentioned earlier in this statement, strategic stability among the nuclear-weapon States is no longer the sole dominant factor in world security. Accordingly, the Conference should not allow its work to be hampered by the strategic consultations among the nuclear-weapon States. The Conference should not just wait for an opportune time to be provided from outside but should create the necessary momentum on its own to strengthen the multilateral disarmament regime. Respective member States should renew their determination to agree on the programme of work this year. This is for world security and for the benefit of all.

Here I should like to add that the priorities of my own Government in the area of nuclear disarmament are well known, so I will not repeat them today. I will only reiterate the following: our concern is not so much the content of the work that we should do, but the fate of our organization itself.

(Mr. Noboru, Japan)

The proposal of Ambassador Amorim has been the basis for consultations for a year and a half. Japan has supported the proposal ever since it was tabled and today, I would like to reiterate our position and declare that we can endorse it as such. The Amorim proposal is widely accepted in the Conference and, in my analysis, acceptable to more than 90 per cent of the member States.

I believe that such a broad support for this proposal derives from the following advantages: first its comprehensiveness. Once it is agreed, the work of the Conference will cover all the priority issues at the same time.

Second, it is based on a sound and well-balanced assessment of the maturity of different issues. If there is an agreed mandate on a certain issue, the work on this issue should be based on such a mandate.

Third, its constructive ambiguity, which is an essential factor for agreement on any difficult issue under the present circumstances. An appropriate degree of ambiguity will help the Conference to become more relevant to the real security situation by resolving ideological conflicts.

I am convinced that the Amorim proposal will never undercut the essential national security interests of any country but will serve to promote agreement to commence the substantive work of the Conference, leading to the enhancement of global security. For those countries which have yet to accept the proposal, it seems to me that the following clarifications could foster a better understanding of this proposal.

First, the Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, as is clearly mentioned not only in the presidential statement contained in the Amorim proposal but also in the annual consensus resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly on the report of the Conference. More specifically, in whatever language the programme of work is couched or, to be more precise, whether the words "negotiate" or "deal with" are used in the respective mandates, the initial phase of any substantive work to be conducted in accordance with those mandates will be the same, with the common understanding that the Conference is a negotiating forum. At what pace such work can proceed and whether such work will ultimately lead to actual negotiations will depend on the will of the member States.

Second, in order to reach the goal of the negotiations, the Conference needs to overcome the many differences in the positions of various countries. The final decision can only be made by consensus. The programme of work does not therefore prejudge the conclusion of the work in one way or another. In other words, every issue is open until all negotiations are concluded, and every country has the right to say "no" to the final product at the end of the day. Then, why say "no" on the threshold of starting work, thus blocking constructive exercises?

I would like to repeat that it is now an urgent necessity for the multilateral disarmament regime to be further strengthened and the time is ripe for the Conference to commence its substantive work. Time counts. If the Conference fails to start its work at an early date this

(Mr. Noboru, Japan)

year, it will have serious negative implications for international security. At that point, a voice might be raised calling for a substantial reduction of the budget of the Conference or even the setting up of another disarmament negotiating forum as an alternative. A Conference which does not work will be vulnerable to such calls and have no other choice but to consider drastically reforming itself so that it could function better. Otherwise, its very existence would be in jeopardy. Therefore, Mr. President and all my fellow Ambassadors and colleagues, it is my sincere and heartfelt appeal to all of you that we should set aside any small differences for the sake of international solidarity and begin our work here and now.

Mr. President, before concluding my statement, which has focused upon the revitalization of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to remind you that there are other important subjects which are not dealt with here. Above all, I am pleased to announce that my delegation has requested the secretariat to circulate, as an official document of the Conference, the Chair's summary of the Tokyo follow-up meeting of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was successfully held from 23 to 25 January.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank you for that statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

The next speaker on my list is Ambassador Carlos Miranda of Spain, who shall be speaking on behalf of the European Union. As it is the first time that he will be addressing the Conference, I should like to take this opportunity once more to welcome Ambassador Carlos Miranda. We look forward to fruitful cooperation with him.

Mr. MIRANDA (Spain) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, before taking the floor today on behalf of the European Union, I would like to say this is not the first time that I have had the honour of addressing the Conference on Disarmament. I spoke here before, in 1987, when I was Director General for Security and Disarmament in Madrid. Spain had just joined the European Union at that time but it was not yet a member of the Conference on Disarmament. The Berlin wall still stood. Since then much has changed. In this very room the frescos of the Spanish painter stirred my imagination and the severe countenance of the Spanish jurist Francisco de Vitoria gazed down on us from these same walls.

It is not exclusively my condition as a Spaniard that is going to inform my statement today, however, as I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. Furthermore, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union, namely, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and also Cyprus and Malta, align themselves with this statement.

Mr. President, it is a great pleasure for me to see you in the important office of President of the Conference on Disarmament. I am convinced that the Conference on Disarmament will benefit immensely from your long experience and diplomatic skills in the difficult situation which it faces. Let me also extend the greetings of the European Union to the Secretary-General

(Mr. Miranda, Spain)

of the Conference, Mr. Petrovsky, and to our Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Román-Moray. I should also like to pay tribute to the ambassadors who have left this Conference and to greet those who, like myself, have joined it in this session.

Few events have galvanized the international system into action so completely in so short a time as the horrific attacks of 11 September 2001 in the United States. At a special meeting in Brussels on 21 September 2001 the Council of Europe had underscored its firm determination to act in concert in all circumstances and agreed to a coordinated and comprehensive action plan to combat terrorism, covering a wide range of measures. In accordance with that action plan, the Council decided to launch a targeted initiative to respond effectively to the international threat of terrorism, focusing on the following elements:

- Strengthening of the relevant multilateral instruments in the field of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control, with a view to promoting their universalization and ensuring their effective implementation;

- Development of specific measures to strengthen export controls, to prevent terrorist groups and the States which harbour them from acquiring materials related to weapons of mass destruction;

- International cooperation, in particular protection and assistance against the use or threat of use of chemical and biological weapons, as well as measures to maintain physical control of nuclear materials worldwide;

- Stepping up of political dialogue with third countries in the field of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament.

Indeed, as stated by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the European Union on 10 December 2001, non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control remain an indispensable element of cooperative security between States. They can also make an essential contribution to the global fight against terrorism by reducing the risk of non-State actors gaining access to weapons of mass destruction, radioactive materials and their means of delivery as well as preventing the spread of conventional weapons.

The entire international community as a whole is now having to deal with the risks posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Our security and stability, at both global and regional levels, are being threatened by such actions. The terrorist attacks of 11 September have lent an even greater sense of urgency to the common endeavour required of all States to reach joint agreement on new instruments and mechanisms to ensure mutual security.

In this changing global security environment, however, the strengthening of international norms and political instruments to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is a main priority for the European Union and it is therefore committed to the reinforcement of the multilateral instruments on disarmament and non-proliferation.

(Mr. Miranda, Spain)

Despite certain unfortunate setbacks, such as that relating to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty or the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, 2001 was not an unredeemedly dismal year for efforts in disarmament and non-proliferation. Multilateral work was successfully conducted in other areas, such as the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty, held in Managua, and the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We welcome the entry into force of the Open Skies Treaty on 1 January 2001.

The meeting in Paris on 7 and 8 February on the international code of conduct against missile proliferation was both productive and promising. The European Union intends to continue playing a dynamic role in the further unfolding of this process.

The European Union welcomes the joint statement by the President of the United States of America and the President of the Russian Federation on a new relationship between the two countries for the twenty-first century and takes note of their commitment to the biological and chemical weapons conventions, as well as to the strengthening of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. We stand ready to work with them and with other States in every possible way in order to attain those goals, especially during the NPT Preparatory Committee and the reconvened Review Conference of the BWC. We welcome the intention of the American and Russian Governments to conduct negotiations in the coming month to formalize an agreement on the reduction of offensive nuclear weapons that will preserve the verification and transparency procedures which exist in current agreements. We are also convinced that this new relationship, together with continuing consultations with other countries, will build momentum for compromise and commitments in this and other multilateral regimes and forums on disarmament and non-proliferation.

The European Union wishes to underscore the importance and urgency of an early entry into force of the CTBT and calls upon all States which have not as yet not done so to accede to the Treaty unconditionally and without delay, particularly those on the list of 44 States whose ratification is indispensable.

The year 2001 witnessed an upheaval in international relations on a truly global scale and yet today the Conference on Disarmament is still unable to launch its work. While paying tribute to all your predecessors in the Chair, and in particular to Ambassador Reyes for his success in reaching agreement on a non-contested issue of our agenda, the European Union can only deeply regret this situation.

The European Union stresses once again its commitment to the full implementation of the decisions and resolutions adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, and also the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. In the context of the Conference on Disarmament, this applies in particular to two important practical steps to which all States parties to the NPT have agreed, namely, the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and the

(Mr. Miranda, Spain)

establishment of an appropriate subsidiary body with the mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament. This undertaking should pave the way for agreement on the Conference on Disarmament's programme of work.

The Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral forum available to the international community for disarmament negotiations. In 1998 it decided to launch - and did indeed launch - negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and international, and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, in accordance with the statement of the Special Coordinator in 1995 and the mandate contained therein, which included both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. Together with the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the immediate commencement of FMCT negotiations constitutes the next vital step in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation process.

The need for such negotiations to commence at the earliest possible stage was clearly stated in the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and reaffirmed in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and also in subsequent resolutions adopted by consensus by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000 and in 2001. Notwithstanding all the delays, the European Union continues to attach the utmost importance to the launching of negotiations on such a treaty during this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament and to its rapid conclusion.

The Conference on Disarmament cannot remain deaf to the legitimate expectations of the international community. We cannot ignore the fact that some items on the Conference on Disarmament agenda have been taken up in other forums. The European Union hopes that the Conference on Disarmament will rise to the challenge and reach an agreement on its programme of work and thus be in a position to address all the substantive issues contained therein.

To succeed in this endeavour, it is essential that the legitimate security concerns of all States be taken into account. Any agreement to be reached now on the commencement of our work must be based on three interconnected elements: the immediate launch of FMCT negotiations, as well as efforts to address both nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, as provided for in General Assembly resolution 56/23, in subsidiary bodies whose mandates must be both pragmatic and substantive in order to be universally acceptable. The European Union is convinced that such an agreement is within our grasp.

Throughout the sessions of previous years the European Union has lent its support and approval to the efforts of successive Presidents of the Conference, including Ambassadors Kreid and Lindt. Their work has been further refined over the intervening months and transformed into document CD/1624, which has come to be known as the "Amorim proposal". In the view of the European Union, this proposal contains the elements for a rapid agreement, provided all members of the Conference display a spirit of openness and pragmatism. We are also convinced that other delegations and groups of countries share this assessment of the situation, in accordance with which the President should be able to find a solution.

(Mr. Miranda, Spain)

There is no need today to recount in detail the views of the European Union on the other items on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament that are included in document CD/1624. We support the beginning of work on those too and we will take up the issue again and set out our position on these items as soon as the Conference embarks on its substantive work. Nonetheless, we would like wholeheartedly to thank all the three special coordinators on procedural issues - Ambassador Seibert of Germany, Ambassador Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Draganov and Mr. Petar Kolarov of Bulgaria - for their dedication and their very valuable contribution to our work. The European Union supports the renewal at the earliest possible stage during the current annual session of the mandates of the three special coordinators and looks forward to assisting them in the efficient performance of their functions.

Allow me here to recall that the European Union is firmly committed to the continuation of the enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament. We particularly favour the future admission to the Conference on Disarmament of those member States of the European Union which are not yet members of the Conference. The European Union also supports the candidature of the associated countries that have expressed their wish to become members of this body.

Mr. President, the European Union wishes to reiate its commitment to multilateralism. We would like to emphasize yet again that which we all affirmed in General Assembly resolution 56/24 T, namely, that multilateralism is a core principle in negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation with a view to maintaining and strengthening universal norms and enlarging their scope. The persisting stalemate within the Conference is thus serving to weaken the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations and the United Nations General Assembly have urged us to agree on a programme work. The European Union pledges its strong support to you and your successors in working to restore to the Conference on Disarmament the leading role that it has been designed to play in this ever-changing world.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the Ambassador for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on my list is Ambassador Mary Whelan of Ireland, who will be addressing the Conference for the first time. I should like to take this opportunity to welcome her once again and to express the hope that our cooperation with her will be fruitful and help us to realize the aims of the Conference.

Mrs. WHELAN (Ireland): Mr. President, on this, my first occasion, as you said, to address the Conference, I want to express my appreciation to you and indeed to all members of this body for the warmth of your welcome, for your advice and particularly for your encouragement. In the light of Egypt's contribution to multilateral disarmament issues and the fact that our countries work together as members of the New Agenda Coalition, it is a particular pleasure to address this meeting during your own Presidency. I admire the efforts which you have made - and have continued to make - to encourage us - the members of the Conference on Disarmament - to discharge our responsibilities and to adopt a programme of work.

(Mrs. Whelan, Ireland)

For many years before my appointment to Geneva, I followed Ireland's efforts to become a member of this body. I shared in the sense of achievement when Ireland was eventually admitted to membership and believed that it would provide the means to work with other States to carry forward our common agenda. It was with great disappointment that we found membership coincided with a period of deepening stagnation and growing frustration.

After three years the Conference is still unable to meet its obligations. In that period the world has become neither a safer nor a more secure place. A few months ago we witnessed the devastation wrought by terrorist attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. The resilience with which the Government and people of the United States responded to those attacks was testimony to the strength of their democracy and the ability of the human spirit to overcome evil. The immediate and continuing support of the international community to the fight against terrorism bears witness to the strength of our collective commitment to what is a common threat and the effectiveness of international action when allied to political will. At the same time that the events of last September highlighted our vulnerability, the response to them demonstrated the need for focused international action.

Outside this meeting room, fundamental change is taking place in our concept of what constitutes threats to international peace and security. Yet in this Conference - which we its members take pride in calling the "sole multilateral forum" for disarmament negotiations - we continue to act as if nothing has changed. In his message of 22 January 2002 to the Conference on Disarmament, the Secretary-General of the United Nations expressed the hope that the Conference would respond to the challenges of disarmament and non-proliferation "with dynamism and determination". He pointed out that such a response requires "a complete break with the prolonged inactivity of the Conference". Yet we seem to make no progress. We fail to carry out the mandates given to us by other forums of which we are members.

Over the past three weeks I have listened carefully to the statements which have been made. All have been thought-provoking, most have conveyed a sense of urgency. All reaffirmed the commitment of the membership to an effective Conference on Disarmament. Some referred to preoccupations with issues of national concern. Speaking on behalf of a small country in an increasingly interdependent world, we have long since concluded that the best way to guarantee our own security is to work wholeheartedly with others to establish multilaterally agreed rules which effectively address issues of non-proliferation and disarmament.

Ireland is fully aligned to the statement which Spain made earlier on behalf of the European Union. Together with our European Union partners, we believe that part of our collective response to the 11 September events must be to reaffirm the value of multilateral measures in disarmament and arms control. There are those who question the utility of such measures, pointing to the danger of non-compliance and the tendency of international agreements to reflect the lowest common denominator. We believe that such criticisms reinforce the need for greater cooperation and should not lessen it.

The report of the Conference to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session recognized that the support for the Amorim proposal contained in document CD/1624 was a basis for further

(Mrs. Whelan, Ireland)

intensified consultations. My delegation, in common with most others in this room, believes that the Amorim proposal provides a basis not only for further consultations, but also for decision by the Conference on its work programme. Ireland believes that this proposal takes into account, to the best possible extent, the interests of all States.

Along with other delegations, we regard the provisions of CD/1624 with respect to agenda item 1 on nuclear disarmament as a compromise. We have consistently favoured the early establishment of an appropriate subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament and that will remain our position. We agree that the Conference on Disarmament should also begin negotiations on a treaty dealing with fissile material. Since 1995 we have, in the Shannon mandate, a basis for negotiations on this issue. Yet some are linking the launch of negotiations on FMCT to proposals to launch negotiations in other areas. It is difficult to understand the merits of this approach. On the third major issue confronting the Conference, we see merit in embarking on a process which will eventually lead to a legal agreement for the non-weaponization of outer space.

When expressing frustration with the current inability of the Conference on Disarmament to discharge its mandate, it is customary to pay tribute to its past history. The negotiation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was the last major achievement of this Conference. Yet the Treaty had not entered into force five years after being opened for signature.

An earlier milestone on the disarmament road was the negotiation 30 years ago of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. In the aftermath of the tragedy of last September we might have expected that the States parties would approach the Fifth Review Conference with a strong sense of common purpose to strengthen its provisions and put in place a verification system. But the Review Conference could not conclude its work and will resume again later this year. With our European Union partners, we believe that it is important to continue working for the strengthening of the application of the Convention in all its aspects. The problem lies not only with our present failure to move forward but also with our inability to build on earlier achievements.

In an otherwise disappointing scene in Geneva it is well to acknowledge the positive outcome of the work of the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. The extension of the scope of the Convention and its existing protocols is an important development. The agreement to convoke a group of governmental experts on explosive remnants of war, with a broad mandate that includes the possibility of negotiating a legally binding instrument, will allow States Parties to respond to the humanitarian concerns that have been expressed on this issue.

If we all, as we constantly affirm, regard disarmament and arms control as issues of great importance, we have to show greater ambition in our future endeavours and a greater willingness to meet the commitments which we freely entered into in the past. In this context Ireland attaches the utmost importance to the full implementation of the outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. The unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapons States to achieve the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals must be accomplished, along with the other 12 steps

(Mrs. Whelan, Ireland)

towards that goal. Ireland, in cooperation with our partners in the New Agenda Coalition and with all States Parties, will actively pursue this blueprint, beginning with the meeting next April of the Preparatory Committee. Some of the commitments entered into in 2000 relate to the programme of work of this body. If we believe in the value of this Conference we need to demonstrate it not in our words but in our decisions.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): Thank you for your statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

While that concludes my list of speakers for today, I see that the Ambassador of Pakistan has asked for the floor.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, it was not my intention to seek the floor this morning but, having heard the statement of my distinguished colleague from France, Ambassador de La Fortelle, I would just like to make one or two brief observations.

We deeply appreciate the decision of the French delegation to convey a report on the Paris meeting which considered the draft international code of conduct against missile proliferation. I would also like to express our appreciation to the Government of France for its invitation to my country to attend this meeting in Paris earlier this month. The Conference on Disarmament, Mr. President, is certainly the most appropriate forum for a comprehensive consideration of the issue of missiles.

While appreciating the initiative taken by France and the European Union, my delegation will avail itself of an early opportunity to outline Pakistan's views on the issue of missiles and why we believe that this subject is a most appropriate subject to be addressed within the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): Does any other delegation wish to speak at this stage? I give the floor to the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. SOLTANIEH (Islamic Republic of Iran): Since this is my first statement, I would like to express my appreciation of your presidency and admiration for the way in which you have presided over this meeting. I wish you the very best success and assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation.

Having listened with interest to the statement by the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan pursuant to the discussions that we held earlier, we believe that there are some merits in the suggestion. May I draw to your kind attention and to that of my distinguished colleague the resolutions that my delegation has proposed in the United Nations General Assembly, namely, resolutions 54/54 F and 55/33 A, of December 1999 and November 2000 respectively, on missiles and the need for a comprehensive, balanced and non-discriminatory approach to the issue and, having considered the mandate and the responsibility of the Conference on Disarmament, we consider that this issue should appropriately be dealt with in this Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): Thank you for your statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I do not see any.

Distinguished delegates, as I announced earlier, I shall now suspend this plenary meeting, and, in 10 minutes' time, I will convene an informal meeting to consider the draft decision on the appointment of three special coordinators. This meeting will be open to members of the Conference and observer States only.

The meeting was suspended at 11.15 a.m. and resumed at 12.05 p.m.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): The 892nd plenary meeting is resumed. Distinguished delegates, I should now like to formalize the agreement reached earlier at the informal plenary meeting and, therefore, I invite the Conference to take action on the draft decision on the appointment of special coordinators on the review of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, on expansion of its membership and on its improved and effective functioning, which is before you in document CD/WP.525, after having incorporated the following amendment, which I shall read in English, since that is the language of the original text.

The second paragraph of CD/WP.525 would begin as follows: "In accordance with CD/1653 (para. 41)", and it would continue as in the original text, with "decides to appoint Special Coordinators".

May I take it that the Conference wishes to adopt the draft decision contained in CD/WP.525, as amended orally.

It is so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): This decision will be issued as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

Distinguished colleagues, I should like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your cooperation and the spirit of accommodation that was displayed in our joint efforts over the last few weeks, which have allowed us to adopt the decision on the appointment of three special coordinators. I sincerely hope that this decision will give a new impetus to our further efforts to reach agreement on a programme of work.

Our next immediate task will be to reach consensus on candidates to fill the posts of special coordinators as soon as possible. I would like to take this opportunity to wish our new President, Ambassador Fisseha Yimer Aboye of Ethiopia, every success in this endeavour and to assure him of our full cooperation in discharging his duties.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor?

(The President)

If there are no more requests for the floor, since my term of office is drawing to a close, I should like to make some concluding remarks.

Distinguished Ambassadors, ladies and gentlemen.

Allow me, at the end of this last plenary under the Egyptian presidency, to review the most important outcomes of the consultations which I have held since my country assumed the presidency of the Conference and to give you some general impressions about the current status of the Conference and the prospects for the discussions to be held under its auspices.

First, the international situation as regards disarmament at the beginning of 2002 is very different from the situation that obtained in the latter part of 2001. Events have taken place which have a direct bearing on many of the most important international and bilateral disarmament treaties, and which many considered to be other than positive. Furthermore, changes in concepts and military technology and uncertainty about the future trends in weapons systems and strategic thinking have raised many questions and, occasionally, concerns. The world saw an unprecedented degree of international cooperation in efforts to combat the problem of terrorism following the events of 11 September last year. This helped to raise awareness of the importance of multilateral, collective action in strengthening the international system for disarmament and arms control and overcoming the paralysis which has afflicted the Conference on Disarmament for many years.

Second, the dynamics of the present international strategic situation, whether they can be characterized as positive or negative, contrast sharply with the paralysis from which this Conference suffers. To me, this contradiction seems worrying. It also heightens our sense of the collective responsibility that we all share. While I cannot state that the Conference is in a position to adopt its programme of work and start its substantive work at this time, I can nevertheless say that I sensed a distinct feeling of responsibility and utmost determination to preserve the credibility of the Conference, so that it may discharge its functions in the best possible way, as soon as the international circumstances allow.

Third, I have tried to hold broad-based consultations characterized by complete transparency, in accordance with our rules of procedure and decision 1036 on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference and in a spirit of complete openness. On 24 January 2002, I held informal consultations affording all delegations the opportunity to state their positions and views on the Conference's work. This is in addition to the statements that we have heard during the plenaries. I have also endeavoured to meet with the regional groups separately and should like to express my gratitude and appreciation to all those that shared their views with me on this subject.

Although we did not manage to reach agreement on the programme of work during the consultations, no delegation expressed a view that differs radically from the general position. In other words, the proposal put forward by Ambassador Amorim in document CD/1624 is still regarded as a basis for further intensive consultations, taking account of the views and proposals already presented in this regard. I should also like to stress the importance of the collective

(The President)

efforts made by the successive Presidents of the Conference, which are encapsulated in the Amorim proposal. The Egyptian presidency had no wish to submit any further proposals on the programme of work that might not have enjoyed the broad support of all members of the Conference. If all members of the Conference have a collective responsibility for reaching agreement on a programme of work, active States members, particularly nuclear States, have a special responsibility for doing so.

Fourth, several delegations presented well-considered and innovative ideas designed to benefit from the technical expertise available in the Conference. Unfortunately, the circumstances of the Conference were not conducive to reaching consensus on any of those ideas.

I should like to express my gratitude to the members of the Conference for the willingness displayed since the beginning of this year's session to make the best possible use of plenary meetings, and, in particular, for the important statements we have heard over the past weeks focusing on the key issues in international disarmament and arms control, including the current situation of the Conference on Disarmament. We were also pleased that all delegations reaffirmed their commitment to the multilateral approach to disarmament and their determination to preserve the Conference's credibility.

Fifth, without wishing to detract from the importance of the decision adopted by the Conference today to appoint three special coordinators on the review of the Conference's agenda, the expansion of its membership and its improved and effective functioning, this measure cannot be taken as an alternative to the substantive work of the Conference. It was adopted in response to the recommendation made by the Conference in the annual report adopted last year, and is a sign of the Conference's institutional vitality. Any measure that the Conference takes in order to revitalize its work should be viewed as a step forward, particularly in the current circumstances. This equally applies to the success of the Conference in adopting an agenda at the beginning of the session.

I hope that the appointment of the special coordinators at the beginning of this year's session will give them enough time to hold broad-based consultations producing tangible results that are acceptable to all members of the Conference. I repeat that while this decision can under no circumstances be a substitute for our substantive work, I am confident that the progress made on procedural matters will have a positive effect on the Conference's work when we take up our substantive work.

I should like to express my deep appreciation to my predecessor, Ambassador Camilo Reyes, who helped us reach agreement on the programme of work and enabled last year's Conference to adopt the decision on the appointment of the special coordinators. I also wish to thank the three special coordinators who were appointed by the Conference last year namely, Ambassador Seibert of Germany, Ambassador Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka and Ambassador Draganov of Bulgaria, for their efforts in discharging their functions. I do, of course, wish every success to those who will assume those functions.

(The President)

The international system for multilateral disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation is going through a delicate phase, on account of fundamental changes in the international security climate. In spite of these changes, the aspirations of many States, including Egypt, remain unaltered. These States rely on this system as a security option and strategic choice designed to achieve international peace and security by establishing international rules that are applicable to all without distinction. The aspirations of the peoples of the world remain the same. They wish to see effective measures taken in all areas of disarmament so that weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, will be eliminated, for the danger of nuclear annihilation continues to threaten the human race.

The Conference on Disarmament cannot ignore these hopes and aspirations nor can it ignore the plea from civil society to allow it to make its voice heard at the Conference. I hope that the special coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference will be successful in allowing non-governmental organizations to participate in the Conference's work.

The real concern that I have sensed among many delegations over the abiding paralysis in the Conference's work is counterbalanced by an equal measure of concern on the part of all delegations to preserve the credibility of the Conference as the sole multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations.

Finally, I should like to express my appreciation to all delegations and colleagues for their cooperation and for the kind wishes which they have expressed towards my country and myself. I should also like to thank Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, and Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, the Under-Secretary-General, for their indispensable advice and help. I should like to thank the entire staff of the secretariat for the efficient and effective support that it has provided to this presidency in particular and the Conference in general. I should also like to thank the translation staff that has worked hard to serve the Conference. From a personal point of view, it has been a great honour to act as the President of the Conference and it is something of which I shall be especially proud in my career, because it has allowed me to work side-by-side with outstanding people both at the diplomatic and human levels. This shows that, in spite of its current difficulties, the Conference remains, as many in the diplomatic community have said, "the best club in town". It only remains for me to wish my successor in this post, Ambassador Fisseha Yimer Aboye of Ethiopia, every success during his term of office. My delegation stands ready to offer him any support that he may need.

This concludes our business for today.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 21 February 2002 in this room.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 894th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, let me express my Government's deep gratitude to the members of the Conference for bestowing on my country the great honour of presiding over the Conference on Disarmament for the next four weeks.

I should like to express my deep appreciation to my predecessor, Mr. Tawfik of Egypt, for so ably and indefatigably guiding the work of the Conference over the last four weeks. I am sure that I can count on his support in discharging my duties and responsibilities in the weeks to come.

I should now like to make a few opening remarks as my country assumes the presidency of this Conference.

Last Thursday, thanks to the efforts of the then President, Mr. Tawfik of Egypt, and thanks to your cooperation, the Conference was able to adopt a decision on the appointment of three special coordinators, on the review of its agenda, on the expansion of its membership, and on its improved and effective functioning, respectively. Our next task in this connection is to reach an agreement as soon as possible on candidates to fill these posts. I have already started consultations on this issue and I hope that, with your support, I shall be able to present candidates to assume these responsibilities soon.

At the same time, I would continue the work of my predecessor of translating the Conference's agenda into a programme of work so that we could proceed expeditiously to our substantive work, which is - you will agree with me - long, long overdue. In order to facilitate this task, I intend to make good use of the mechanisms available to the President in accordance with the rules of procedure and with the relevant decisions of the Conference.

I would also like to encourage you to make good use of the time allotted to the Conference. If we are sincerely interested in overcoming the existing impasse in the Conference - as I am sure we are - and if we honestly want to bridge the existing divergence of views and to facilitate agreement on a programme of work - as I am sure we do - we must use the resources and mechanisms available to us immediately. In this connection, I would like to emphasize the importance of the continuation of a business-like debate. The exchange of views, a common and indispensable element of the preparatory stage of all negotiations, could be crucial in creating a necessary momentum, which would facilitate a consensus-building process. I am pleased to note that, during the first month of this session, the Conference has benefited from the lively debate and from the statements delivered by a number of high officials from member States. I would therefore like to appeal to you to continue this trend and to inscribe your names on the list of speakers for the forthcoming meetings.

(The President)

There are no speakers on my list for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I see none. I should now like to invite you to take a decision on a second matter for today, on requests by two States, namely Kuwait and Yemen, to participate as observers in the work of the Conference during this session, without having them considered first in an informal plenary. These requests are contained in document CD/WP.526, which is before you.

May I take it that the Conference decides to invite Kuwait and Yemen to participate in our work in accordance with the rules of procedure?

It is so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I see none.

As I indicated in my opening remarks, I would like to begin immediate consultations early next week, first on the designation of the special coordinators on the three items, and then on the substantive work of Conference, in that order, but that does not mean that the issue of substantive work is of secondary importance. On the contrary, the issue is still one of great urgency and of the highest priority for us. I will carry out consultations on both at the same time, approaching various groups of the Conference, so that by our next plenary meeting we should have at least an idea of where we stand with regard to these two questions, special coordinators and the main work, the substantive task, of the Conference.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 28 February 2002, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.